
PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE STATE.

A Series of Sermons, Delivered in
Emmanuel Reformed Episcopal Church, Ottawa, Ontario.

BY

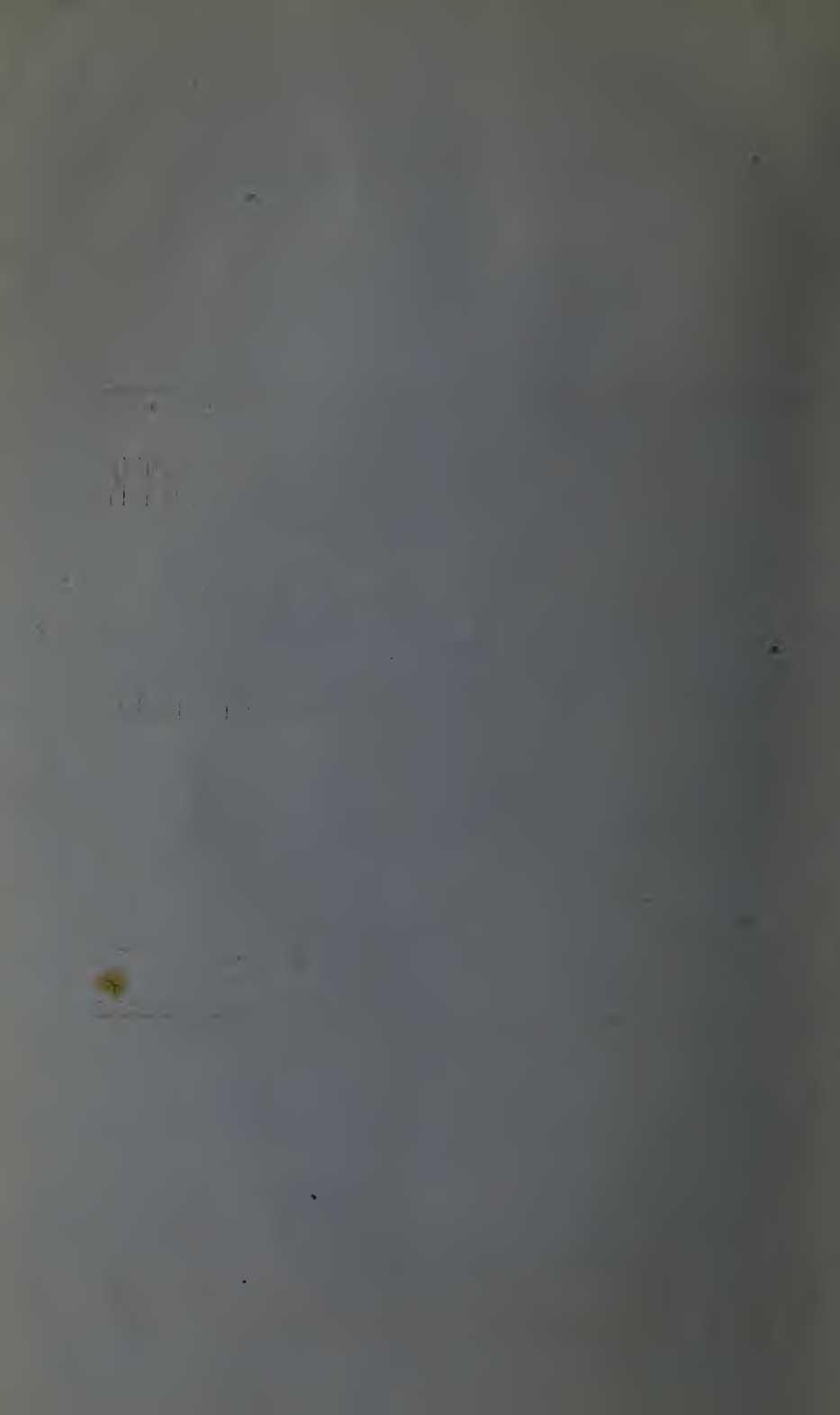
WILLIAM H. COOPER, A.M. D.D.,
OFFICIATING MINISTER.

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1882.
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OTTAWA.

Printed by C. W. Mitchell, 6, 8 and 10 Elgin Street.

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OTTAWA, NOV. 14TH, 1882.

REV. DR. COOPER,

Dear Sir :

We, your friends, who have with great pleasure heard your Sermons on the "Problems of the Future State" respectfully request their publication in pamphlet form.

We know that they did much good, and excited much interest : and we wish to have them preserved.

REV. J. J. JOHNSON.
GEORGE MAY.
R. W. MARTIN.
FRANCIS HUNTER.
J. HERVEY SPENCER.
ROBERT SWITZER.

E. B. BOTTERELL.
THOMAS TAYLOR.
JOHN B. SIMPSON.
SAML. THOMPSON.
T. D. KIRBY.

OTTAWA, NOV. 16TH, 1882.

Dear Brethren :

In the trust that, with the Divine blessing, the Sermons alluded to may prove conducive to prayerful searching of the Scriptures, and profitable meditation, I cheerfully put them forth ; and remain,

Yours, in the love of Christ,

W. H. COOPER.

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OFFICIATING MINISTER, 1882.

I.

HADES: OR, THE PLACE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS.

And it came to pass that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried; and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue: for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy life time receivest thy good things, and in like manner Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: that they who would pass from hence to you may not be able: and that none may cross over from thence to us. (Revised Version) Luke XVI, 22-26.

The future destiny of the soul is a subject in which we cannot all but feel interested. It should not be treated crudely or rashly, but only with our best thought. No idle discussion is that upon which I propose to enter; no question of fancy metaphysics or of purely speculative theology—although, with the latter we shall have, probably, somewhat to do. Indeed, no discussion can properly be regarded as an idle one which has to do, seriously and soberly, with our eternal destinies.

Fortunately, we have a sure word of God—a written and Divine Revelation—whereunto we shall ever do well to take heed: and consistency demands of those of us who profess to believe in that Word that our opinions should be made to harmonize with its clear and explicit declarations, and by "clear and explicit" I would be understood to mean such renderings of the original Scriptures as the best scholarship of the day will accept and sanction. I hold those Scriptures to be the final standard of appeal as to all ques-

tions of Christian doctrine; and that no view should be held or maintained, either from press and pulpit, which to say the least, is out of harmony therewith. At the same time, I would enter a solemn demurrer against the claim of infallibility for any man's private interpretations.

It is evident to the thoughtful observer that great confusion of idea exists in regard to the state after death. And I think that a most reprehensible looseness of expression has been indulged in from the pulpit. Views have been enunciated with the greatest confidence, which would not bear the test, for one moment, of even our English version of the Scriptures. In proof of this apparently somewhat wholesale statement, I need only remind you that it is very extensively taught that the soul, at death, passes immediately to heaven or hell, the intermediate state of *Sheol* amongst the Hebrews, and *Hades* amongst the Greeks, both signifying the invisible place, or abode, of the disembodied dead, being entirely ignored. And this teaching prevails, it seems to me, for fear of the bug bear of *Purgatory*—an idea in no wise connected, of necessity, with Hades. *Souls* are not purified through the instrumentality of material fire: the conception is too gross to be believed; and has no warrant in Inspired Scripture. The spiritual man is often purified thro' the process of *affliction*, and is cleansed and sanctified thro' the operation of the Holy Ghost.

It is evident furthermore, that the immediate transfer of the soul, at death, to either Heaven or Hell, cannot be taught in the scriptures; and for this reason—that it involves the grossest inconsistency, in that it would call down from Heaven, and place at the bar of judgment, the saints of God who for ages have been enjoying the everlasting rest! With what propriety—it might well be asked—could the Redeemer say to those on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared

for you," they having already, and long before, entered upon the bliss of that inheritance?

The soul, it should be remembered, is not the man, neither, of course is the body. *That* proposition needs no argument. We are duplex in nature, if not triplex. We consist of body, mind and soul, as some discriminate. We consist not of soul alone, nor of body alone, but of both in union, or combined. At death, a separation takes place: the body returns to the earth; sinks into ocean's depths; or is scattered broad-cast as ashes to the four winds of Heaven; the soul separated, for a time, from its tenement, enters into Hades, the Invisible World, or, as St. Peter calls it, the prison, (2 Peter, III 19), or place of safe-keeping, of separate or departed spirits, there to await the morning of the Resurrection.

I have said that the body is not the man; neither is the soul, but "Christ THE FIRST FRUITS." What means this expression?

When, early on the morning of the first day of the week, the two faithful Marys went to the sepulchre, expecting there to find the Lord, they encountered, in the place of the dead two shining ones, who said to them, "why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. (Luke XXIV, 5.)

And afterwards, when he came and stood in the midst of the disciples, they were afraid, thinking it a spirit, when, to re-assure them, he said, "handle me for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." (v. 39.)

That same body, after dwelling amongst them the mystic forty days, ascended up to heaven, and now dwells, in figure, at the right hand of God,—*i.e.* in his unspeakable glory. "Christ the first fruits!" So also shall we dwell with him—if faithful—our bodies and souls alike immortal.

At sound of the archangel's trump will occur the General Jail Delivery. That is to say, Hades will be emptied of its tenants of disembodied souls, both bad and good alike; and those souls will be united again, each to their corresponding bodies, now prepared, by a miracle of the Almighty power of God, for that new and entirely different state of existence, either of weal or woe, upon which they are about to enter. The identity of the man again complete, but lost while suspended by death, we shall stand before the great white Throne, there to receive the award of the Judgment—the wicked to receive their sentence of punishment, in company with the devil and

his angels; the righteous to join the General Assembly and Church of the first born whose names are written in Heaven.

I know that men deny this doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and also this other one of the General Judgment. But for my part, I cannot otherwise understand the scriptures. If St. Paul, in particular, does not teach of such a resurrection (for instance in I Cor., XV) I am at a loss to know what he does teach there. Nor is there anything unphilosophical in his doctrine. He simply declares that at a given time, figuratively spoken of as the sounding of the archangel's trump, the bodies of the sheeted dead shall rise again, changed as to their *substance*, unchanged as to their *essential identity*: the corruptible having put on incorruption, the mortal immortality.

Thereupon the soul meets the body, and the body the soul, and thus the integrity of the man is consummated; and that not, as before, for a limited period of 20, 50 or 70 years, but for all *Eternity*. We shall die no more, if fortunate enough to escape the "*second*" death, but be equal to the angels. And this reunion must evidently be that of each soul to its corresponding body, as existing here on earth, for otherwise it would not be a resurrection but a new creation. The Apostle—with as Inspired authority—is most explicit on this point. He silences at once all cavilling against the Resurrection of mankind, declaring that Christ shall *change* our vile bodies—not abolish the present one, nor substitute another, but, "shall change this vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Philipp. III, 21.) We shall therefore know our bodies, notwithstanding the change as to quality which will have passed upon them. Our own, still, not as to numerical particles, all of which the *germ* alone excepted, may have been transmuted again and again into other organisms, they will be etherialized, to fit them for the new and permanent habitation which God has provided for them.

And that there is not even a physical impossibility in the case is demonstrated from the fact that, even in this life, notwithstanding the constantly recurring changes in the substance of our bodies, *identity* is still preserved.

But it will be, perhaps, objected that this doctrine does not harmonize with the teaching of the parable constituting the text? To my mind, on the contrary, it does harmonize most perfectly.

Let it be observed that the rich man and Lazarus were *both* in Hades, though not in immediate contiguity. It should

be remembered that there was a great gulf of separation between them—a gulf as wide and as deep as that which now morally separates between the true sons of God and the children of the Evil One. They could converse together; but, without possible interchange of location.

And their suffering, as well as joy, was but *anticipatory*. Their souls were, as yet, in a separate condition; and sentence either of condemnation or acquittal had not yet been finally pronounced upon them. At death, doubtless, a particular judgment, so to speak, had been made known to them. God, in his love and mercy, had spoken peace to the one: Conscience, in tones of terror, had spoken to the other. They thus knew of the destiny in store for them. I would emphasize the fact that, as already stated, both Dives and Lazarus were, according to the Greek, in Hades. It is significant that the word is not GEHENNA—the term always used in the New Testament when speaking of the place of the lost. True, the word is "Hell," in our present authorized, but it is Hades in the Revised Version: it is sufficient to know however that when the former version was made, the term had a double signification, and not as now, one exclusively. Expressions change, in language, with the lapse of time, so that a sense good in one age becomes obsolete in another. Take, for instance, the marriage service of the Church of England. In that service the bridegroom is made to express his "worship" of the woman, in the now obsolete sense of honor.

"The word Hell"—says Dr. Adam Clarke (on Matt. xi. 23)—"used in the common translation, conveys now an improper meaning of the original word; because Hell is only used to signify the place of the damned. But, as the word Hell comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to cover or hide, hence the tiling or slating of a house is called *heling* to this day, and the covers of books (in Lancaster) by the same name, so the literal import of the original word Hades was formerly well expressed by it.

So far, then, as the text is concerned, instead of confirming the theory of an immediate transition from this state of existence to either heaven or hell, as we now understand the latter, it is undoubtedly opposed to it.

And here I would quote the eminent Dr. Chalmers. "I think it very impressive"—he remarks—"when Samuel complains of having been disquieted, and when he tells Saul that he and his sons should be with him on the morrow—all in

harmony with the doctrine of an intermediate Hades, where the disembodied spirits of men dwell till the day of the resurrection."

On reflexion, it will have to be conceded that the parties in question were in the same place or region, inasmuch as that they *conversed together*. It will surely not be maintained that a soul in heaven could by any possibility, hold intercourse with a soul in hell! They are in the same place as the original also compels us to understand, but in *separate divisions* of that place. There could be no passing from one part of the common prison, or *place of safe keeping*, to the other.

The expression "Abraham's bosom," is evidently, to my mind, a figure denoting a degree of happiness, great undoubtedly, but inferior to that of Heaven. Abraham was, after all, a man; a weak one in some respects, judged from our standpoint, and therefore not altogether a fitting type of that glorious abode wherein believers shall enjoy the more immediate presence of God hereafter. Lazarus then, I apprehend, was in the enjoyment of a sweet and comforting, but withal imperfect and anticipatory realization of the coming bliss of Heaven. Dives, on the other hand, lifted up his eyes in torments. The original word is a strong one meaning tortured, as it were, I think, by troublesome recollections of the past and sore apprehensions of the future.

Comfort, then, and its reverse: peace, happiness, bliss, although in limited degree, and their opposites, are all involved in the Scripture idea of the place in which the souls of Lazarus and the rich man were confined, in expectation of the Resurrection. In that section, so to speak, of the invisible world in which was the soul of Lazarus,—and which may be denominated *the Paradise of the blest*—repose the souls of all who have died in the Lord from the days of righteous Abel even until now, Enoch and Elijah most probably not excepted—most probably, I say, for, as we are reminded by Bishop Hobar, (p 52), "no man"—says our blessed Lord—"hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven." "Enoch and Elijah were translated according to the foregoing declaration of our Lord, not to that heaven to which Christ hath ascended, and to which he will finally exalt his saints; but to some separate abode of blessedness and peace." Peter also in his great speech at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost used this remarkable expression: *David is not ascended into the heavens* (Acts II. 34); where, then, was his soul if not in Hades?

Paradise is not Heaven, although very commonly supposed to be, but an *intermediate place of bliss* the same as "Abraham's bosom." This may, perhaps, seem to some a startling proposition. We will examine it, therefore.

"THIS DAY," said our Lord to the dying thief, "*Shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*" That was "Good Friday," or the day of the Crucifixion; and yet, after he had arisen, he said to Mary, "touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." His departure into Heaven did not take place until forty days after his Resurrection. What became, then, of his promise, and how was it fulfilled, for assuredly it was not violated? A daring theologian he must nee is be, who in view of this fact should affirm that Paradise is Heaven, and not an *intermediate condition*.

Well asks my friend the Rev. Jos. D. Wilson, in a recent treatise on Hades, "Was the Saviour's gracious promise nothing more than that both He and the thief should be buried? Certainly not! He must have referred to some condition of the soul." (p 93.)

I shall show, hereafter, that during the interval between his Crucifixion and Resurrection,—or, as we should say, on the Saturday, the soul of the Redeemer, he taking with him in fulfilment of His promise, the soul of the penitent thief, visited Paradise—in other words, that part of the nether regions or place of departed spirits which in the interpolated creed is signified by the word "hell," and from which Lazarus conversed with Dives

as we see from the text. The reason of his visit there may form the subject of a future discourse.

We should always let Scrip'ure speak, and not seek to force our own constructions upon the Inspired Word. It is not our Revelation to each other, but that of God to us. It teaches God's truth: and if we would but divest ourselves of preconceived notions, opinions and prejudices, we should find that its revelations are frequently, and in reality, the very opposite of what we had expected. No Church tradition should be allowed for one moment to set itself up in rivalry with the Word of God.

Whilst, however, I stand for correctness of phraseology in teaching of so important a subject as that of the Future State and deprecate the looseness of expression which has been indulged in by not a few, I would remind you, in summing up, that after all, the presence of the Saviour is that which, to the believer, will constitute the bliss of our hereafter. "I am going to Heaven soon" said a little boy, "and then I shall see Jesus, and be with Him forever." "But," said the missionary, who was visiting him on his death-bed, "if Jesus were to leave Heaven, what would you do?" "I would follow Him." "But if he went to Hell, what would you do then?" rejoined his interrogator, to me, as it seems, not wisely, "Ah!" was the reponse, "there is no Hell where Jesus is: His presence is Heaven."



PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE STATE.

II.

The Company, Worship, and Bliss of Heaven.

After these things I saw, and behold a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, of all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying to me, These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And I say unto him, My Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revised Version) Rev. VII, 9-17.

We bury the *body*, but not the *soul*. When we lay away our friends in the repulsive grave, and heap sods on the coffin, we do not cover up the *character*, nor do we hide from the experience of mankind the blessed example of a consistent and beautiful Christian life.

I like not that word death as commonly applied to man, for it is so apt to prove misleading. When we speak of dying, we speak of but a part, and that an inferior part, too, not by any means of the entire man. The flesh and blood, the bone and sinew, die and become dust; not so the spirit: *That* lives on. Nor does the body even, perish: for, as I read the Scriptures, we are taught therein to hold and believe that so much of this fleshly body of ours shall survive dissolution as to constitute the germ of that infinitely nobler spiritual body which shall be given to us at the Resurrection.

What the changes may be to constitute that spiritual body out of the remains of this, is not revealed. But identity will be preserved, That much we know.

I shall treat the text as having reference to neither the past nor to the present, but to the *future* condition of the Lord's saints. It is through attributing to it a present rather than a prospective sense that many interpreters, as I conceive, have erred. I hold that the departed in Christ are in a separate state of blissful expectancy, rather than positive enjoyment, of the glory to be revealed. Their spirits are in Hades now,—or Paradise, if you like that word better—for the simple reason that the assumption of their resurrection bodies is a necessary precursor of their entrance into Heaven. And it were the sheerest anachronism for our Lord to say, as we are premonished he shall say at the General Judgment, to those on His right hand, "come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom," upon whose blessedness they *had* entered years before.

Either we must give up the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as altogether a misconception of the teachings of Revelation, or we must hold to the doctrine of an intermediate Hades, or place of blissful repose of God's saints, wherein they await, as the Apostle speaks, the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies. And I would have you remember that the inspired Apostle in speaking of that redemption, or re-assuming, or more literally, buying back, far from speaking nonsense, must have known full well whereof he did affirm. Nothing short of unmitigated ignorance could lead us to suppose that those who for ages have enjoyed the supreme bliss of that place which the Scriptures denominate Heaven, should, after the lapse of those ages, come down to earth for the purpose of carrying their bodies back to Heaven! At sound of the Archangel's trump, I hold, the cerements of the grave will be unclosed, the gates of Hades will be unclosed, and then the throne set, the books opened, and Judgment pronounced, those on the right hand will enter the mansions prepared for them by the Father, to be thereafter forever with the Lord.

Now, I am not willing to yield the doctrine of the Resurrection of the body, despite the ridicule and contempt which have been poured upon it by would be Scientists and would be Theologians.

Without that key, the Apostle Paul's grand I Cor. XV, were to me an unmeaning riddle. So the expression, "Christ the first-fruits" in particular. And the words of our Lord recorded by St. John, (v. 29), and the corresponding passage in Daniel, XII. 2 stating that "they that are in the tombs shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, others to the resurrection of Judgment, or condemnation," can have no meaning other than a resurrection of bodies sepulchred, since souls cannot be buried. The dry bones in Ezekiel's vision symbolize undoubtedly, in my judgment, the same great truth.

"It is time indeed," I say with Dr. Ebrard, "that this biblical doctrine of the state after death were again preached to congregations; for the common, hard and truly uscriptural doctrine"—as he well styles it—"which knows nothing further after death than happiness or condemnation, is, in its practical effects, equally mischievous with the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, in which a trace of the doctrine of Sheol, but only a caricatured trace of it, is contained." Notes on Heb., p. 347. And it were well, that if but occasionally, the clause, "He descended into the place of departed spirits," be repeated with the creed, as sanctioned by our Church.

"Death,"—says Bishop Burgess,—no mean authority—"leads the just thro' the intermed ate Paradise, through the joyful reunion of the Resurrection, and thro' the blessed award of the last day, to all which we are taught to name most fully Heaven and the life eternal." Last Enemy, p. 325.

But to proceed to the text. I remark, in the first place :

I. THAT THE REDEEMED IN GLORY ARE A MULTITUDINOUS COMPANY.

"I saw a great company which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands."

Of course we should avoid too great literality in the consideration of this description. The central idea is that vast will be the host of God's redeemed. The white robes may symbolize the righteousness of the saints. And gorgeous indeed will be that assemblage. I suppose that, to add to its splendor, there will be the angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, those shining ones, the Lord's winged messengers. In the context, or rather the 14th chap., the multitude of the sealed are called an hundred and forty-four thousand, that is, twelve thousand members of each of the

twelve tribes of Israel; but that would be the merest fragment of the heavenly host—for there are so many more that it is said "no man could number them."

I do not know how to reconcile our Lord's description of his own as a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom with this description of the host of Heaven, unless he is to be understood as instituting a comparison between the seemingly few who accepted and the multitude who rejected him. But nevertheless, and with a sad discount, the numbers of the redeemed will be not a few. Many will be there whom we in our shortsightedness, expected not to see. All along the ages God has had a Church; and by His Spirit has been constantly gathering members into the fold. How many He will yet gather in before the end shall come, we are not told, nor is it necessary that we should know.

From Abel to Abraham; from him to Malachi; from Christ to John, and from John till now, what a mighty stream of the Lord's saints have been sweeping onwards and upwards from amongst every kindred and tongue and nation under Heaven! And they will all be there. Oh, what a mighty phalanx of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and evangelists, martyrs and confessors shall we behold, my brethren, when we get to Heaven; and what mighty volumes of praise shall roll upwards from that vast throng, to the throne of God! Timid women who for Christ alone were valiant; strong-minded, noble men, who endured reproach and contumely in the Master's cause, and thought not even their lives dear unto them, it only by their sacrifice they might finish their course acceptably and win their crown, oh, what hosts of these shall we behold! Confessors of whom the world was not worthy! True men and women who endured with patience all that the ingenuity of the wicked, prompted by Satan, could do to their hurt—all the fiery darts that could be hurled against them: those barbed arrows of calumny, detraction and persecution that must bring the quivering flesh away whenever you would extract them!

There shall we see crowds from the poor and despised of earth—those who slept upon wretched pallets, dwelt in miserable hovels, who day by day ate the bread of poverty, and by night watered their couch with tears, but whose sins were washed away in the ocean of the Redeemer's blood—their hearts steadfast with God. There we shall see the afflicted and distressed, though no longer

sick ; the forlorn and the friendless ; the despised and the outcast, but not of God—men and women who waded through the waters and forced their way through the fires to reach their crown, or who endured the biting pangs of penury and want, rather than accept the glittering wages, together with the dread retributions of sin.

And fain would I trust that we shall see there also not a few of the high and mighty, the rich and the noble, the illustrious and the talented of earth : for these, too, are all God's children. Kings have been bad, and nobles profligate, and the wealthy wicked : but there have been some to relieve their class from execration. Not all are vile, I trust, no ! not even the great majority. There was an Edward VI amongst the Kings ; and there is a Victoria. There was a Coligny amongst the nobles, and there are a Cavan and a Shaftsbury. There was an Amos Lawrence amongst the wealthy ; and there are—I will not say who or how many, who I trust, may know, give largely and freely to the Lord's Treasury.

Rank and influence, wealth and talents, are not, nor ought they to be, in themselves, a bar to any man's advancement, nor the means of such advancement to a seat in the Kingdom of Heaven. God forbid that we should seek to narrow its portals to exclude either rich or poor, even though it were within our power. Let what is of the earth perish with the earth, whilst he who has employed his means, talents, influence, be they great or small, for the advancement of the Master's cause, will meet due reward in the day when the Redeemer shall come to make up His jewels. And then, I doubt not, will be brought to light many a secret deed of love and mercy of which the world has hitherto known nothing. Then will be acknowledged in the open light of day, by the Redeemer Himself as administered to *Him*, many a cup of water given to moisten fevered lip of suffering martyr, in noisome dungeon, or at the fearful stake.

It will be a mighty host, that company of the Redeemed ! To say nothing of the babes who have died in infancy, untasted by them the cup of sin which the world administers to its votaries—not counting those cherubs numerous as the stars of the milky way, what crowds shall be there of those who had repented them of their sins before their day of grace was past and gone ; and Oh, what greetings and congratulations of long separated friends ! And the boys and girls of our Sunday Schools the young in years and not old in sin, and the pati-

ent self-sacrificing Teachers, how many shall be there ? A grand army of Christian soldiers, a glorious band !

But amid the whole, conspicuous above all the rest, I think we shall see Abel and Noah, Enoch and Elijah, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob, David, Daniel, and many more of God's Old Testament saints. And of the New, there will be the blessed evangelists, and ardent Peter, and the magnificent Paul, but pre-eminently the beloved apostle John. And of a later day, there will be a grand procession filing heavenward, of men leaders in the camps of Israel who will *then* see eye to eye ; but who could not, or would not, walk together when here on earth. And they will then, I think, feel ashamed of the trifles which separated them in the Church below. There we shall see Latimer, him of the coat of frieze ; and Ridley, of the courtly robe. And Jerome, also ; and good old Wickliff, "the morning star ;" Melancthon, the gentle ; and Huss, and Cranmer, and Ridley, all of whom so bravely endured the fire. Passing along, we shall catch sight of the Sixth Edward, and Simeon and Cecil, Bickersteth and Chalmers, John Newton and Cowper, of the sweet Olney Hymns ; and also Venn. There we shall see Wilberforce and Haldane, Owen and Richard Baxter, him of "The Saints' Rest ;" Doddridge and Scott, Cummins and McIlvaine, the judicious Hooker, and the saintly Beveridge, and the Wesleys, and grand old Whitfield, and Jndson, and Brainerd, and Henry, Martin that other sainted one ; but I can not stop to name other than the few, not Protestants alone, but Romanists too, notwithstanding the corruptions of their Church, will contribute of their numbers to swell the grand total of the heavenly host—Fenelon and Massillon not amongst the least. That is a jaundiced medium through which we too often view things now. Bigotry and exclusiveness, prejudice and intolerance—those wretched barriers between Christians ! will all be swept away ; and we shall see things and men as they were and are, not as they seemed. The question will be then, not who has had most zeal for sect, but who most love for Christ, most zeal for souls, most care for the glory of God and welfare of his fellow men.

I borrow the language of one of the most eloquent writers of his day : "Dwellers on the Mississippi and Missouri, and in the back woods of Canada, and the prairies of the West, are there, Millions from the Andes and the isles of the Pacific, from the mountains of

Thibet and the cities of China, from every jungle of India and from every pagoda of Hindostan, the untutored Arab and the uncultivated Druse, and the 'tribes of the weary foot,' the children of Salem are there, * * and Augustine and Luther are there also, and many we in our uncharitableness, or bigotry, or exclusiveness, or ignorance, excluded from Heaven, will be there also; and our sires and sons and babes and parents will be there, completed circles never again to be broken, and their united voices will give utterance to their deep and enduring gratitude "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and that hath made us kings and priests unto God, even the Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Cummings Apoc Sketches, 1st series, p. p. 28, 9.

II. 'BUT SOME WILL BE ABSENT !

And here the Theologian is confronted with a difficulty the most tremendous which could possibly beset him.

The difficulty is this. Perhaps when we shall come to look around in the courts of Heaven, should we in God's mercy ever reach them, some of us may miss a parent, father, brother, sister, or child, from amongst the glorified. We look again and again with painful eagerness, but we look, alas! in vain. *The loved one is not there!*

Now that conviction, we might think, cannot but give us pain. But in Heaven there can be no pain, for the text asserts that there will be no tears there. How reconcile this contradiction? How can one be man and not mourn the lost condition of absent friends; and where mourning is how can there be perfect bliss?

The thoughtful Burgess attempts to meet this difficulty, but to my mind unsuccessfully, with the suggestion of "simple, humble faith in that all-providing wisdom which can enable the human soul to forget all which it might be distressed to remember, can fill it with all joyous and holy meditations, and can in a thousand ways preserve the flowers of memory without its thorns." Last Enemy, p. 289. *

"THE FLOWERS OF MEMORY WITHOUT ITS THORNS!" A solution, I fear, more beautifully poetical than soundly theological. Have we any reason to believe, from Scripture, that God will work such a tremendous change in our moral nature as is here suggested, on our transference to the Eternal World? On the contrary, have we not reason to think that as we are here, we shall be very

much there—but simply *improved editions*, not essentially other women or other men?

We shall most certainly carry our natural affections with us into the Eternal World, or Heaven were no Heaven to us. Shall we all who have fought the good fight together here below, meet again as *strangers* on the golden streets? Are there to be no rapturous recognitions there? Shall Luther not know Melancthon? Shall Ridley not recognize Latimer? Will that sorrowing mother who wept such scalding tears when they hid away her little darling with face of marble beneath that cold, dank mould, not clasp it to her arms again on reaching the farther shore? Shall I not meet my children? This is either fact or rhetoric, scripture or poetry. Which? And if mere fiction—if, after all, there are to be no recognitions of friends in Heaven, what mean those consolations which the minister of religion *professes* to administer in the Master's name to bursting hearts, in their hour of sorrow? If nothing, then he too is a sham and a fraud! but if not such, there must in his estimate be recognition.

And if recognition of friends, then a *cognizance of their absence*. There is no avoiding that conclusion. I have a theory, to me clear, distinct and satisfactory, on this most important subject: but shall leave you to form your own.

III. I pass on to notice briefly, THE OCCUPATION OF THE REDEEMED.

For doubtless there will be occupation, and that of the highest and noblest character of which we can possibly conceive. The metaphorical language of the text is proof of that. "Figures," says some one, "have no value except as they express realities." That there will be music in Heaven, I doubt not, and also that there will be worship—and such music as we have never heard, such worship as we have never rendered. What mean those mysterious words of the Redeemer: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom."? I think with the author already quoted, that "He surely pointed forward to some scene of holy joy from which they might look back to that sacramental feast, and recognize the unity of the cup on earth with the cup above."

The anthems of Heaven! The new song of the Redeemed! The throne, the Lamb, the vast army of the saved! Shall we chant those anthems? Shall we sing that song? Let us look well to it betimes, brethren beloved, that our names be written in the Book of Life!

PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE STATE.

III.

The Future Recognition of God's Children.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.—Rom. VIII, 19.

Various and conflicting are the constructions which have been put upon this passage. Perhaps there are few more difficult, and in regard to which there exists greater difference of opinion. The trouble arises out of the varying opinions of the Commentators as to the right interpretation of the term 'creature' in the text. Some understand by it the whole visible creation, including both the Kingdoms of animate and inanimate nature, and consequently under the former head, man alike in his civilized and savage, in a Christian and Heathen state, together with all the lower animals; and under the latter, every variety of form of matter. This is the opinion held by Olshausen, Bloomfield and others, and for which the former has been rather severely handled by one of our soundest commentators.—Turner.

Others, again, maintain that the Apostle speaks of a moral creation, *i. e.*, of Christians, or the Christian Church converted from Judaism to Heathenism: but to this view there are, to my mind, insuperable objections. Lastly, there are those who would compromise and understand by the "creature" or "creation" of this passage, all intelligent and sentient creation—all who are capable of the passions spoken of by the Apostle, and so of course the whole human race.

Of these various interpretations, and they can all show illustrious names in their support—I hold, with Chalmers, to the first. The Apostle, by a bold figure or metonymy, speaks of inanimate nature as of an intelligent or sentient being in a state of bondage, groaning and travailing for its redemption. This style is not unknown to Scripture. "The morning stars sang together" we read in Job, and the Psalmist calls upon the floods to "clap their hands, and the hills to rejoice before the Lord." "The creature"—says the Apostle—"was made subject to vanity"—that is, if we understand him of man, to "a frail, unhappy, miserable condition;" and if

of inanimate matter, to derangement and disorder.

The idea seems to be that this earth is not what it was, nor what it was designed to be. *Sin has cursed it*: everywhere, in storm and earthquake, volcano and miasma, we seem to perceive the consequences of that curse. It yields only to labor; here it is obstinately barren; yonder it gives briars and thorns. Everything has its enemy, both in the kingdoms of animate and of inanimate nature. The beasts, fishes, and reptiles prey upon each other. And in the vegetable world, blight and mildew, the worm, the drought, the flood, seem continually on the watch to ruin and destroy. Nature appears at war with nature. Beautiful though it be, it is a beauty which has been marred; and from this marred condition I can understand the Apostle as representing the whole, in his magnificent rhetoric, as groaning to be redeemed. And that it will be redeemed, restored to its pristine beauty and perfection, I think there is good reason to believe from Scripture. That the curse will be removed, the earth yield spontaneously and become even yet more beautiful than before the fall of man, seems foreshadowed in more than one text. That a time shall come when nothing shall hurt nor destroy in the Lord's holy mountain, is the declaration of an inspired prophet. And St. Peter, quoting that prophet, speaks of Christians as "looking for new heavens and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness."

My subject now is, however, and more particularly, *The Future recognition of the Lord's saints*. And this recognition I think we may safely argue from the declaration of the Apostle that "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

1. I need scarcely attempt to prove that we shall know our friends in Heaven. And yet, strange to say, there is a wonderful obtuseness of perception in regard to this subject. People are constantly found who seem to doubt it. One would think it must be evident

that we can not be divested of our identity, by the mere fact of translation hence to the world of spirits. The casket may be destroyed; but the jewel it contained remains imperishable.

2. The very general prevalence of a doctrine may, I think, be regarded as a strong presumption in favor of its truth. Of course given the condition that the doctrine itself shall not be in conflict with either sound reason or inspired Revelation. That a belief in Future Recognition has been held in all ages by the great majority of mankind, seems beyond dispute.—See Appendix A.

The faith, strong and simple, of many heathen men in the reality of a future state of existence, I am constrained to say might well put to shame some who live in this day of superior illumination, because gospel truth!

4. We find the same idea of future recognition amongst Mohammedans, Jews, Christians and our own North American Indians of by gone days. The Hindoos, we know, believe this doctrine: in the days of *Suttee* the wife was immolated on the funeral pyre, in hope of rejoining her departed husband. Amongst the ancient Danes, it was a practice for slaves, subjects and friends of the deceased, to destroy themselves, in order that they might serve in the other world those whom they loved and respected in this. Harbaugh p. 34.

5. The belief in a future re-union with the departed in the world of spirits was, in fact, and is, a *universal* belief. How it came to be so, unless founded in truth, I must leave others to determine. Let us now see whether the doctrine meets with any countenance from the Sacred Scriptures. As deduced from the Bible, however, it is rather inferential than dogmatical. On this point I quote Bishop Burgess:

“That it should ever have been doubted whether the inhabitants of the spiritual world recognize each other in that abode, is but an example of the wide influence of unbelief, suggesting the strangest dimness wherever the Scriptures had not spoken in the most explicit words, even though the obvious reason for which the words had not been spoken was, that to speak them was needless. Why should not the departed recognize and be recognized? How can their very nature and being

be so utterly changed that they should be able to exist in the same world, to remember, and to be a general assembly, a church, a society, without recognition? If the future life is the sequel, and result, and retribution of the present, how can recognition fail? Not a step can we proceed, not a conception can we form, not a statement of divine revelation can we clearly embrace in our contemplations of the future life, without admitting or involving the necessity of mutual recognition as well as mutual remembrance and affection. Were Moses and Elias unknown to each other? Did the Martyrs below the altar utter the same cry, without knowing the history of their companions, each a stranger amongst strangers? Was Abraham a stranger to Lazarus, or was Lazarus seen and known by the rich man only? Could those who watch for souls render account for them with joy or grief, and yet not know their doom? Could Christian converts be the “glory and joy” of an Apostle at the coming of the Lord if He knew them not? Could the Patriarchs be seen in the kingdom of God by none but those who should be shut out? All proceeds on the supposition of just such knowledge there as here. It is probable, indeed, that the human soul must always clothe itself with form, even in the separate state; and such a form would bear the same impress which had been given to the mortal body. There is no extravagance in the wish of Dr. Randolph to know Cowper above from his picture here, or in the same thought as expressed in the verses of Southey on the portrait of Heber.” Last Enemy p.p 287,8.

One has written thus:—

“I count the hope no day-dream of the mind.
No vision fair of transitory hue,
The souls of those whom once on earth we knew,
And loved, and walked with in communion kind,
Departed hence, again in heaven to find.”

Mant. p. 98.

Yes! it is no “day-dream,” no fond delusion, that which tells us that our departed friends are not lost to us, though, as we are accustomed to say, “dead.” We shall see them again in the spirit world; know them, and be known. They have disappeared, for the time, from view; but we shall behold them again, in a higher and better atmosphere than this.

6. There is no great truth which has

not been perverted, and no good thing which has not been counterfeited. It is often difficult to discriminate between paste and diamond; the genuine bank-note, and the spurious. Almost everything is imitated in this age of shams. Wooden houses are brick faced; brick houses stone faced; and even "The Church" has fallen into the habit of deception, with her ship-loads of wood of the true cross, and bones of Saints and of the Virgin, her winking Madonnas, and her St. Januarius liquefactions!

And so with modern Spiritism. It has seized hold of, and perverted, and abused, and made ridiculous, a great truth, to such an extent that, by a natural revulsion, men are nearly ready to deny the spiritual factor in religion altogether. Nay more, it is even dangerous for the pulpit to advocate the sweet, comforting, and ennobling doctrine of these sermons, lest the mad-dog cry of "Spiritualist!" should be raised incontinently. Nevertheless, the truth must be spoken. What is that truth? is a question of the deepest interest to intelligent Christians.

7. A sober authority, argues the possibility of the nearness, and even sometimes the actual apparition, of our departed friends, from the universality of the persuasion. And I have thought when reading of Christs' walking on the sea, when the disciples "supposed," we are told, "that they had seen a Spirit," and of his telling them to handle him, "because a spirit has not flesh and bones as they saw Him have"—I have thought that were such apparitions an impossibility, the Holy Spirit would not have permitted the sacred writers to set these impressions down without some mark of censure actual or implied. "It is his angel," said the frightened disciples, when Peter stood before the gate, after his miraculous escape from prison. If this be superstition, men may make the most of it! Were it not that necromancy is so plainly forbidden in God's Word, I should be willing even to investigate the phenomena of so-called "Spiritism."

"An universal belief like this"—says the able writer already quoted—"is not sufficiently explained by an universal longing for communion with the departed. Its foundation is rather in the actual discourse which our spirits hold with the dead, and which they seem to hold with us, when their images

are before us in our solitary contemplations, our reveries and our dreams."

"Thoughts of a deceased friend"—he goes on to say—"become sometimes and in some mental constitutions, so vivid for a moment, that the difference between recollection and present reality is all but imperceptible. The departed spirit seems even present to the inward eye; his influence is actually and most powerfully felt; may he not be indeed near, though invisible?"

This is strongly put—perhaps too much so? For my part, without casting any reflection upon the soundness of the bishops judgment, I freely confess to a want of such experiences. But, to proceed: "Wesley," he remarks, "who knew Swedenborg, and believed him insane, has spoken of his own clear conviction that the strong impression on his own mind of the images of deceased friends at particular moments, was produced by their actual invisible presence. Oberlin supposed that for many years he enjoyed intimate communications with the dead." And he continues thus: "that the appearance, visible as well as invisible, of the dead, is possible, the instances related in the Bible are decisive. That they have ever appeared to the outward eye, except in those instances, can scarcely be proved from history, to the satisfaction of the skeptical or even of the indifferent. That, however, the strongest sense of their influence, as if they were present, has often been impressed upon the mind, in those states in which visible objects have least control, is confirmed by ten thousand testimonies."

"There is no difficulty in believing,"—says Mr. Harbaugh, who has written well and beautifully on this subject—"that, on the part of saints in Heaven, an acquaintance with us is kept up. We have lost them for a time, but they have not lost us. As they have gone higher, they have capacities and privileges which we, who are still beneath them, have not; and this may extend to a constant oversight and interest in us. This sense is as natural as any other to the passage, *Then shall I know even as I am known.* * * * We have reason, and also intimations of Scripture, to confirm us in the belief that our sainted friends are bending an interested eye of love over us in all our earthly pilgrimage—that they keep up a tender and affectionate acquaintance

with us, and stand ready when we fail on earth, to receive us into the arms of holy and eternal love at the very gates of * * Paradise. Or must we believe that they are less interested in us than the rich man was for his brethren?" "We live in the midst and under the constant power of myterious unseen influences, which strongly declare the fact, that we are in a sphere of existence influenced by a higher world, and under the attention of higher intelligences, who are ever drawing us to themselves; and soon as the separation of soul and body—the natural and finite from the spiritual and infinite—shall take place in death, we shall discover at once how awfully and sweetly near we have always been to the dead, and how much we shared their affectionate sympathies."

I have drawn thus copiously from the writings of others, and those of no mean reputation, that my own opinion might not stand alone: and now, in conclusion, I would speak a few words to the bereaved, who form the great majority of most congregations.

8. *Our friends live*, my dear brethren; and we shall see them again, having departed in Christ, on the instant of our casting off the garments of the flesh. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Thus would I interpret that text: their manifestation to our quickened vision after we too have passed through the grave and gate of death. Our spirits long for that reunion. From the innermost depths of our souls there is ever gushing up a flood of desire for their companionship, which cannot be quenched short of actual fruition. Our departed friends! Our sainted dead! Yes: we shall see them again, embrace them again, love them again in that land where separations shall be no more, and where all tears shall be wiped away. The Holy Spirit has enjoined us "concerning them that fall asleep," that we sorrow not as those who "have no hope;" and that, I think, he would not have done, were we not to meet our loved ones in the bright spirit land. Weep not, then, for your friends who have died in the Lord. Separated are they from us, but only for a time. "Separated," I

said. Perhaps not even that? Who shall say that the all-wise disposer of events may not have removed them hence *on purpose* that they should minister to and help us onward on our pilgrimage to the better world? Who knows but that their spirits still surround and hover near us, a glorious happy band of "witnesses," to cheer us on our way to Heaven, to pour the soothing balm of comfort into the troubled spirit, and to animate with the hope of that glorious rest of the saints of God?

Ye mothers bereaved! dry up your tears: weep for yourselves—if weep you must, but not for your departed little ones. The Christ hath told us that "their angels do always behold the face of our Father who is in Heaven." Surely you would not withdraw them from that august presence? A lady, sober-minded and Christian, once told me "it seemed as though the spirit of her darling daughter never left her—so conscious was she of its presence!" And she was thereby comforted.

Brethren, one and all, not long shall we be separated from those dear ones of our kindred who have gone before us to the spirit land, and entered into rest. We shall recognize and be recognized, should we continue faithful, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And we shall know them not as strangers, but *as we knew them when on earth*. Every faculty of the soul quickened; every bright feature of the character, and for aught I know, of the *person* even, improved and beautified; brighter, holier, better editions of what we knew them here, superior every way to what once *they* were, and *we* are now. Infirmities of the flesh and spirit all left behind, and yet identity preserved! I am not quite sure but that *grief* may still find place, though chastened and submissive, because of the conscious absence of those not in Christ: as to *that*, let us trust in God.

We shall know our friends, then, for what can hinder? Weep not therefore, I say, to the mourning and bereaved. We shall meet again in that bright land of pure delight:

Where Saints immortal reign (where)
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

Let us prepare to meet them by deeds of holiness, and lives of faith!

PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE STATE.

IV.

Ministering Spirits.

Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—(Revised version), Heb. xii. 1.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit Salvation?—Ibid i. 14.

That the Pulpit is dull is often charged; and perhaps the charge is not altogether without foundation? There are debates in Parliament, or in Congress, and political harrangues, which are also dull; and legal arguments, and news-paper editorials! Let their authors throw the stones!

In regard to the first named, people say that it is ever the same old, old story; and this is sometimes made a pretext for non-attendance in the Sanctuary. But this can be only true, in the sense of a lack of interesting topics, when the rich mine of inspired truth is suffered to remain unworked by him who is set to "divide" it to the Lord's people.

There are subjects almost innumerable, and which come properly within the province of the preacher, and yet are seldom or never discussed in the Christian Pulpit. The text treats of one such, and in regard to which I do not remember ever listening to a sermon within the whole range of my experience. Assuredly if some wells run dry, it is not through lack of water, but the will to use it.

I do not advocate sensationalism. "There was much grass in the place:" "Old shoes and clouted," are poor texts for sermons. All texts should contain something as a key-note which shall lead the congregation to expect a season of profitable meditation. Solemn trifling should, of all kinds of trifling, be most earnestly deprecated. It were almost the assertion of a truism to say that the themes of the Eternal World, the great mystery of man's future, as well as the many mysteries of his present, the actual condition and future occupation of the Saints of God, with their correlatives,—it were superfluous almost to say that topics such as these should

never be treated with other than the profoundest reverence, when not with awe.

There is a habit of explaining away the Scriptures, metaphorizing the plainest statements, and glossing the most express declarations of the Word, and with which I have but little patience; for which I have no respect. The text has fared thus at the hands of this class of would be expounders of the Lively Oracles. We have been gravely told that the "cloud of witnesses" here spoken of means the band of inspired writers of the Old Testament, and with about as much warranty as had the surgeons in attendance upon the late martyred President of the United States who pronounced that terrible pus-pocket, or cavity, the original wound! The autopsy revealed, however, how greatly they were mistaken: just as will the autopsy of sound judgment and of a correct Biblical exegesis, the great error of those who forget the wholesome Canon that, when not opposed to reason, Revelation, or common sense, the Scriptures should *always* be received in their plain, literal and grammatical acceptation.

What right have we, for example, to take the prophecies in which future blessings are distinctly promised to the present outcast Israel, and make Zion signify the Christian Church, and then coolly appropriate to the Jewish people the curses and denunciations? And what more right have we to say that the "cloud of witnesses" of this interesting text does *not* mean what the words seem evidently intended to express—a vast host of departed saints, but a cloud of testimony, the record of their example? Surely the Apostle Paul, who was a scholar, not an ignoramus, could have found words to express his meaning? *he* would never have confounded "testimony" with the witnesses themselves!

I grant, and candidly, that I find here a difficulty so strong as to forbid my enforcing the interpretation of this sermon with any the least approach to dogmatism. If the doctrine of Hades, advocated in this series of discourses,

be the true one : that is to say, if it be true that the spirits of the departed in Christ do not immediately at death enter into Heaven, but are detained in Paradise awaiting the *resumption of their bodies* at the Resurrection, then how could they be so far present as to surround us who are still here on earth ?

This is the difficulty stated in all its force ; and I can not solve it even to my own, and probably therefore not to your entire satisfaction. The true scientist, however, will always be ready to recognize a *fact*, no matter how stubbornly it may bear upon any preconceived theory of his own. And he will yield his theory, in the face of plain and unanswerable demonstration. So should the Theologist. He is not put to state theorems, or to establish hypotheses, but to “rightly divide,” so far as in him may lie, “the word of truth.”

The two ideas in question may not be antagonistic, after all. Who shall say that the Hades of Scripture may not be an expression so wide of signification as to include the possibility if not the absolute fact of spirit communication, at least that of spirit supervision of the career of such of us as remain still on earth ? It is a sweet and comforting idea, to say the least. And we should beware, I think, of reducing our religion to the level of a cold, dry, hard, unfeeling materialism. Whilst avoiding superstition and fanaticism, we can not yield our hold of the Poetical.

We know that Moses and Elijah appeared to the Lord on the Mount of his transfiguration, and we know from the record that Samuel was called up by the witch of Endor, after his decease ; and that he actually appeared before Saul. By what means he manifested himself to the guilty monarch we are not informed ; but certain it is that it was a bad man and a bad woman who did the necromancing, and that such practices are forbidden by God in His Holy Word. (Is. viii. 19, 20.)

In this Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle Paul—presumably the author—devotes the whole of his first chapter to angels and their ministry. Why do we hear so seldom about this subject of angelic ministrations from the Christian Pulpit ? Why must it be ever the same hard, dry, didactic teaching ? Should men be so anxious to preserve a reputation for orthodoxy that they must

needs be ever harping upon dogma, and treading in the same old groove, to the neglect of topics of the deepest interest, as all those questions are which relate to the spiritual life of man ? Is not *all* or every Scripture inspired of God profitable for instruction in righteousness ? Why, then, should we harp upon some, and overlook others ?

“We are compassed about,” or surrounded “with a cloud of witnesses,” says the Apostle, in one place ; and there are “ministering spirits”—or angels, (from the context) “sent forth to do service for the heirs of salvation,” he tells us, in another. The question arises : are these two separate and distinct classes of beings ; or are they one and the same ?

I think they are not the same ; and for the reason that the one class is represented as in the passive act of *witnessing* how we acquit ourselves in the conflict with sin, whilst the other class occupy the attitude of *helpers*, or ministrants—as doing service. I shall speak of them accordingly, as different individuals:

The Apostle speaks of a cloud—a classical metaphor for a vast assembly, a great multitude, a mighty host of witnesses,—“martyrs,” it is literally, the martyr being one who has sealed with his blood his witness or testimony to the faith. We are surrounded with this host of sainted confessors of God’s truth. Not necessarily by any friends or relatives of ours according to the flesh : I do not say *that*, for which the passage does not seem to afford warranty, but a cloud of martyrs or witnesses, whatever this may mean.

It does seem to mean, beyond reasonable controversy, the saints of God ! The Apostle devotes considerable portion of the preceding chapter to the enumeration of a portion of the glorious host of the Lord’s redeemed, whom He represents, by a figure drawn from the Olympian games, as standing upon the race course intent upon the efforts of the competitors for the prize ; a crowd pressing in upon the racers, so to speak, in their anxiety, just as we see now on occasions of equestrian or pedestrian games. But he only names a few, for time would fail, he says, to tell of all of them—those invisible spectators of the conflict being waged by their brethren who are still in the flesh.

The passage clearly indicates, to my mind at least, that we of the Church militant, we who are still runners in the Christian race, we who have yet to win the heavenly crown, are surrounded by an innumerable host—albeit indistinguishable by mortal eye—of the spirits of the just made perfect; the spirits of men and women who have toiled and fought, and suffered obloquy and derision, pain and persecution, in the good Master's cause, many of them sealing ultimately their unswerving testimony with their blood! These encompass us as though a cloud; they look upon us with an interest the most intense. They watch our every movement; see every muscle-strain as we press onward, every relaxation of the thews and sinews, as, discouraged or losing faith, we, for the time, draw back. And watching us so intently, in the nature of things, they are cheered by our successes, saddened by our defections.

But these are not the only spectators of our trials and sufferings, our strugglings and our victories. The inspired writer tells us also, in terms unmistakable—although interrogatively put, as is often the fashion of Scripture when implying an affirmative,—that God's angels are charged with the duty of ministering to or doing service for God's children—for those, that is to say, who "shall inherit salvation."

Ask me not concerning the *nature* of those ministrations, for, on that point, God's word is silent; and we may not be wise above what is written. The *fact* of angelic ministrations towards the human race is a fact indubitable. They watch over us, I doubt not, from the cradle to the grave; in our hours of gladness and in our hours of sorrow; in sickness and in health; in prosperity and in adversity. They stand by us—those blessed "messengers" of God! to strengthen and sustain in the fierce hour of temptation, to comfort and support in the trying moment of dissolution!

We wonder at the faith and constancy of the martyrs; and seem to think that, because the love of so many waxes cold in our day, this age would prove barren of victims for the Master, were it to become one of fierce and fiery persecution. But we should not forget those ministering spirits—those angelic mes-

sengers commissioned from the throne of Jehovah. Invisible to the eye of flesh, it was their mission, as I believe, to give strength and support to the drooping hearts of those otherwise weak men and women who were called, in the all-wise Providence of God, and in the defence and confirmation of the faith, to pass through the fires of martyrdom. What but such an influence could have imparted to its victims, strength to endure the darkness and the dampness, the chains and hunger of the cells of the Inquisition? Who but an angelic visitant could have inspired the soul to resist the tempting bribe of liberty, and to suffer willingly the excruciating agonies of the rack, the wheel, or any other of the manifold and most devilish forms of torture? Had not the blessed Christ sent His messengers, would they not have counted their lives dear and refused to surrender them, when, seemingly, all was to be lost, and nothing gained, by that surrender?

And are there not times, in our own experience, when the spirit seems moved, as by an exterior power, to meet some extraordinary emergency? Are you not conscious, frequently, of an influence which you can not account for? an influence warning, almost, as it were, in audible tones, of impending danger, and urging to its avoidance? Never was there a greater fallacy than that of the popular proverb, "second thoughts best." For my part, I have generally found that my *first* impulse was apt to be the true one. Whence come those impulses? Say you they are the original product of one's own independent mind? And what is that reply but a mere begging of the question?

God carries on His work in the human soul through the instrumentality of means of His own providing. Undoubtedly He has endowed each soul with certain powers of volition or free agency, in order to that soul's responsibility. But He has made it responsive to the touch of His own divinely appointed agents, just as the chords of the harp or the lute respond to the touch, when not almost the breath, of the skilled practitioner; or as the flower opens its petals to the sun-beam; or, as the electric current flashes across a continent, at will of its manipulator.

But I shall perhaps be told this theory of angelic ministration conflicts with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? that it would supersede that Spirit's agency in the hearts of men in the great work of the soul's salvation?

I need only say, in reply, that if the objection be valid, the objector must be wiser than was the inspired Apostle!

"Are they"—*i. e.*, the angels, of whom He is discoursing, "not sent forth to do service"—as the Revised Version renders "for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation;" God works by means, alike in his Kingdom of nature and of grace: and he can therefore, and does, employ subordinate agencies in the accomplishment of His purposes of mercy and of goodness towards the world.

I come, lastly, in this connection, to consider a point of the deepest interest to thoughtful Christians—the question of *whether our friends departed have any knowledge of what is taking place here on earth?*

Speculation on religious subjects is not wrong, provided it be kept within due bounds, and do not degenerate into dogmatism. I am impatient of those, as already intimated, who would altogether eliminate the poetical from our theology, and especially of those who are so rigidly orthodox as to *bend backwards*, forgetting that they are not infallible, and that what to one servant of the Master may seem altogether the right view, to another equally devoted may not be so. The legitimate Freedom of the Press has been already secured to us. The Freedom of the Pulpit, which ought to be no less dear, is yet a *thing of the future*. I know of more than one Minister in the "orthodox" ranks, of various denominations, who confess to the holding certain views on mooted points, but say they "*dare not preach them!*" Is there one single sentence in all Scripture which would warrant the belief that at death our beloved departed cease from all interest in us? And is there a single scripture which would authorize the statement that they *know* nothing of our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows? And if the Bible teaches no such negation, is not the subject legitimate matter of discussion? Surely the presumption is not unreasonable that, unless simultaneously with the death of the body,

the soul or spirit also becomes insensible—and no Scripture that I know of gives sanction to *that* idea—a conscious redeemed soul must, in the disembodied state, take not only interest, but a most deep and tender interest in the progress heavenwards of the dear ones left behind it in the flesh? Selfish indeed must the heart be, which, its own felicity assured, should feel no earnest concern in regard to the felicity of others!

We stand in the midst of a world of awful mystery. Could the veil be withdrawn, I do not doubt we should find the material—wondrous though that be—but as nothing in comparison of the immaterial or spiritual. There are more chariots and horses of fire than those which carried Elijah the prophet in that whirlwind up to Heaven! This circumambient atmosphere, Oh, could we but penetrate its mysteries! Should *it* be Hades, how peopled with innumerable throngs of God's redeemed, and what legions of angelic minitants flying to and fro on their errands of love and mercy! However that may be, it is not supposable that our Heavenly Father, who loves His redeemed children with a love which is inexpressible, should deny them the sweet consolation of knowing the progress in Christian grace and heavenly meetness which is being made by the friends whom they have left behind on earth. I do believe they know of it; and cannot but take comfort in the thought.—*See Appendix B.*

To believe that those who have entered into rest, and who therefore KNOW its blessedness, may be permitted to watch over us and help us, can do no harm; and may be productive, under the Divine guidance, of no little good. That conviction may inspire to deeds of love and mercy—to the forsaking all that may grieve the Holy Spirit, or bring reproach upon the sacred cause of our dear Master. That thought may lead us to desire pleasures which are not of earth, but which are at God's right hand forever more.

Wherefore, then, my brethren, "seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

4. But remember there must be fitness—a fitness of imputation, and also of personal holiness, for without these no man can see the Lord. The first becomes ours in the moment when we believe, the Saviour's unsullied holiness being accounted unto us for righteousness, and the latter effected in us through the daily sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

Without these requisites entrance within the gates of the New Jerusalem were no privilege to you. You could not be happy there, for just as the wicked man will carry his hell with him in his own bosom, so shall the saved take with them their heaven. Surely you will not think it morally right that God should compel you, if unprepared, to enter heaven? The very fact of unfitness would induce you to seek your own exclusion; and this is a thought that I would recommend to your most serious and prayerful consideration. Take a resolutely ungodly man, and set him in the midst of an assembly of Christ's worshipping people here on earth, and he will find himself out of his element, prayer a burden, praise an unwelcome exercise, and therefore his wandering footsteps are seen so seldom wending their way towards the sanctuary; and just so would it be in regard to heaven. We shall take with us into the eternal world the predispositions and antipathies we entertained in this, and therefore the man who loved not God here will not love Him there; he who hates holiness and piety and virtue here will hate them there. The elements of each one's moral constitution will continue to be precipitated by a law which is fixed and invariable. The righteous, therefore, will shine as the stars in the midst of heaven's pure glory, whilst the wicked shall go to their own place—that which they themselves have chosen.

It is just such a heaven as God's word reveals, and I have feebly endeavored to portray, which the soul longs for as the fitting complement, the satisfying compensation of this world's life of so much

misery and wretchedness. Hearts sick of its hollowness and deceit are longing for it everywhere; and without some such rounding off as that it would look as though God's plans of happiness for the race were marred by a power he could not control, but that we know could never be. There are some in this congregation who are longing to know what shall be their future; and for that reason I have chosen the subjects of these sermons. In the words of a gifted preacher of the day:

"To-day there rises before me the vision of the world's struggle and need and of God's great fulness—a fulness like the sea, like the plenty of the land, whilst all about is the hunger, the thirst, the cry of the multitude. Oh, how I long to bring this fulness and this want together! I think of Jesus as he stood by Galilee or on the Mount, as He mingled with the joy in Cana, as He talked by the well, as He comforted the widow of Nain, as He blessed little children, as He wept by the grave, and I wish that I might know His love and repeat His words and live His life, and that His ministers and His churches everywhere would open wide their hearts and their doors to welcome the multitude. I know of the passion, the sin, the hardness and blindness of hearts, but I know that God is the Father of all, that where sin hath abounded grace hath abounded much more, and that He calls all and is able to save all."

And I close with the closing lines of one of our finest poems—"Yesterday, To-day and Forever":

* * * Zion is our home;
 Jerusalem, the City of our God.
 O happy home! O happy children here!
 O blissful mansions of our Father's house!
 O walks surpassing Eden for delight!
 Here are the harvests reaped once sown in tears:
 Here is the rest by ministry enhanced:
 Here is the banquet of the wine of heaven,
 Riches of glory incorruptible,
 Crowns, amaranthine crowns of victory,
 The voice of harpers harping on their harps,
 The anthems of the holy cherubim,
 The crystal river of the Spirit's joy,
 The Bridal palace of the Prince of Peace,
 The Horest of Holies—God is here.

found written in that record of righteousness—the Lamb's book of life. They are the sanctified in heart; the men and women, who, whilst passing through the trials and storms of life, in faith and patience possessed their souls. Through the spirit's influence they have been made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." They have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Master "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," was the legend recorded against their names in the books of Heaven's Chancery, in the moment of their departure hence; and of all such it is written that they shall attain a part in the first Resurrection; and upon them the "second death" shall have no power.

2. But there are who perhaps will say "that is a very exclusive kind of Heaven!" Surely you would not limit it to the comparatively few whom you have indicated? What of the Jews, Mohammedans, Hindoos, and all others of the vast host of heathens and unbelievers generally? Shall the multitudes with whom we daily associate, and who make no profession whatever of any other than a purely natural religion, be forever excluded from the heavenly inheritance?

Brethren: let us not seek to be wise above what is written. We are not the judges of our brother. It is not for me to say what will be the fate of the unbelieving Jew, or of him whose mind has been steeled by education against the influence of Christianity, or of the man to whom the Saviour has not been revealed in all his glorious fullness. To his own Master each will stand or fall. All will not be judged by the same rule; that we do know; and we are told, furthermore, that he to whom much is given, of him much will be required, and he to whom little, of him little. Heaven is not so much a negative as it is a positive revelation. That is to say, we are informed not so much of those who shall not, as of those who shall enter therein. In our Father's house are *many* mansions, and God has a place for all according to their merits or demerits. It is a blessed truth that "the Lord knoweth them that are his;" and that He will make due allowance where *we*, in our short-sightedness, might be intolerable and uncharitable.

3. But this we *do* know, on the authority of Scripture, that Heaven is essentially where Christ is; and that none but those who love and serve him can enter therein. And this in the eternal fitness of things, for obviously there must be harmony of feeling and of temperament in order to the enjoyment of the Divine presence, and adaptation of spirit to

the surroundings of heaven. Lacking these, it were no longer heaven—the beatific abode of the Saints of God. The inhabitants of that place serve and worship God; they rejoice in the sunshine of His countenance; they rejoice in the fellowship of the Redeemer; they all sing the new song. The harmony is unqualified for; they cast unitedly their crowns before the throne, and chant, in heaven's own music, "unto Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. A bad man would himself desire that the doors of heaven should be closed against him. The harmony of the upper sanctuary is, I have said, unqualified; for, where discord is, there cannot, in the nature of things, be *perfect* happiness. But there is nothing to mar the serenity of the scene. And how such perfection of content could possibly obtain amongst other than the followers of the Lamb when called to sing his praises before the throne, I cannot conceive. In this respect the church on earth cannot be regarded as the counterpart of the church in glory, for here alas! we have differences and recriminations, alas! too often bitter ones. Here we have jealousies, mistakes, short coming: the servants of Christ, owing to the corruption of the flesh, are too like other men, but *there*, ah! there, there will be none of that. Seeing, as we do, through a glass darkly now, we misconceive and misapprehend each other; we are intolerant and overbearing; we take wrong views of each other's doctrine, and do not sufficiently comprehend each other's motives, and so, too frequently judge harshly and erroneously; but yonder all that is obscure will be made plain, and each Christian saved by grace will regard his brother Christian as equal to himself, equally acceptable to the same beloved Master, none will seek pre-eminence over the other, all hearts filled to overflowing with gratitude and love. In view of the supreme delight of that most holy place, well may we sing:

"There are depths of love that I cannot know,
Till I cross the narrow sea,
There are heights of joy that I may not reach,
Till I rest in peace with Thee.

Oh, the pure and unsalld happiness of that blest abode of the saints of God! who but must wish that it may be his? As stated in my opening remarks, it may most assuredly be yours and mine, provided we comply with the conditions. If fail we shall, the fault will be ours alone—the fault of our rebelliousness or indifference. God is willing, and Christ is willing, and the Holy Spirit is willing, that we all should enter in.

Lord. Nothing can separate him from the love of Christ. Let persecution do its worst! Even though a hostile world should unite to cast out our name as evil, the Lord would still, and nevertheless, know and recognize them that are his.

3. A great mistake, then, it is to associate the idea of heaven, as of necessity, with that of the period of death. It were the merest truism to say that the body is not the seat of the emotions. I have seen men and women racked with pain whose spirits were in the fullest and most complete enjoyment of the Saviour's peace. Ready they were and willing to depart and be with Christ, nay, longing even for the hour of their transition. To think that the dissolution of this fleshly frame has necessarily aught to do with our souls' heaven is most preposterous. True, the animal spirits are often and seriously affected by the ills which afflict the body, but the soul which has a well founded hope on Christ the Rock of Ages, will not be affected even by the thunders of the judgment day itself. The body crumbles into dust; the soul lives on in unbroken continuity. Again:

II. WHERE IS HEAVEN? it may be asked, *has its locality?*

1. That it is *somewhere* in space cannot, I think, be doubted, for we read of it as *occupied*, and occupied by spirits, and these have form and identity by which they may be known, which were impossible apart from space. But if it be objected that God cannot be localized, I answer that the objection is but in part legitimate, for, while God is everywhere in His own universe, even in the very caverns of Hell, we read of him as "dwelling in the Heavens." That is a very different idea from the superstition belonging to a past age, but utterly unworthy of the present, which would localize Him in a few crumbs of bread or drops of wine, at the beck of a so-called "priest," standing before a so-called "altar." Our fathers repudiated *that* fantasy centuries ago; although, shame to say it! there are those to-day who would again fasten the exploded dogma upon the venerable Anglican Church.

I am at a loss to understand why there should be difficulty in receiving the idea of Heaven a locality—a fact of materiality, within the domain of physics, equally positive with the existence of Jupiter or Saturn, Venus or Uranus. The telescope, it is most true, has given wondrous revelations of the magnitude and the magnificence of God's glorious universe; but even that has not been able to reveal the

secrets of the milky way, nor to calculate the distances of the nearest of the fixed stars, as the astronomer will tell you. But when we come to think, as is most probably true in fact, that with all the wonders thus laid open to our view—and they are most stupendous—we stand as yet but within the vestibule of God's great temple. Like Newton, we saunter along picking up here and there a pebble from the shore, the great ocean of truth meanwhile lying all unexplored beyond us. I doubt not that, could we but see them, as in prophetic vision, we should behold myriads upon myriads of shining orbs peopling the infinitudes of space and of which the most accurate of all the sciences has not conceived the most remote idea. Inasmuch, then, as we as yet know nothing in comparison of what yet remains to be revealed to the eye of science, how dare we presume to say that the idea of Heaven as a locality is a Utopian figment of the imagination—a mere poetic creation? We have picked up a sand or two from the beach, and say these are all there is of them! We have become slightly acquainted with the wonders of this, our own solar universe, and from *that* premise attempt the impossible feat of proving a negative, predicating the non-existence of any other!

Most assuredly, since God has found place for the worlds we do see, He is of might sufficient to the finding of room in the vast depths of space for the heaven or heavens which at present we do not see?

2. Again, be it remembered that God is personal, and not a mere abstraction as some would make Him. Therefore, we cannot divest ourselves of the conviction that there must be an intimate relation between personality and locality. God's children shall be like him, we are told, and *see Him as He is*; and how that scripture could be verified unless there be place and glorious manifestation, I cannot conceive. And what place more fitting for such a revelation of the Divine presence than the "Heaven of Heavens" those who disbelieve may tell.

3. *Who are they that shall inherit Heaven?* is a further question which it well behoves us to consider. And fortunately there is a "sure word" of God on which we can depend for an answer to this enquiry. I wish to bespeak your intelligent consideration of this definition:

1. They are those who have truly repented them of their sins, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb: the great host of God's redeemed out of every nation and kindred and tongue under the whole Heaven. Their names will be

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V.

The Heaven of Heavens; What and Where is it? and Who shall Inhabit it?

Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. Is. lxiv. 14.

This is quoted in 1 Cor. ii. 9; and the Revised Version renders the quotation thus:

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not.

And which entered not into the heart of man.

Whosoever things God prepared for them that love Him.

We all wish to get to Heaven; nay, we all hope to reach its blessed shores. We know that we must traverse the chill waters which flow between this world and that one yonder; and that sooner or later we shall be called to make the plunge into their dread depths: and I venture to say there is not one here present who would not recoil with horror from the thought that he or she should fail of ultimately reaching the blissful land

"Where saints immortal reign."

And, thanks to God, we all may reach it if we but will, for Christ came to bring life and incorruption (2 Tim., i. 10) to light through the Gospel. There is no uncertainty about this thing. St. Peter, writing by inspiration, told those whom he addressed that when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested they should receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Pet., v. 4). And St. Paul, that grandest of men, rejoiced in the conviction that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, should give to him at that day, and not only to him, he adds, but also to *all them that love His appearing* (2 Tim., iv. 8).

Therefore I say we all may reach Heaven who will, but on certain specific and not unreasonable conditions. The crown of glory will surmount the brows of all who shall comply with the terms of its attainment, for obviously there must be terms and conditions. Heaven, it should be remembered, is the reward of the faith and patience and perseverance of the Lord's saints. It is no cage of unclean birds. Clearly, the principle of selection must obtain in regard to its inhabitants. Being, as it is, the more especial abode of God, speaking after the manner of men, for God is everywhere, filling immensity with His presence, so that the very heaven of heavens

cannot contain Him; but, nevertheless, being the especial place of the Lord's habitation, there will not be gathered there an indiscriminate company of the pure and of the impure, of the righteous and the wicked, of the servants of God, and of those who serve Him not, for that fact would destroy its bliss, and so constitute it hell in a degree. Heaven is *the purchased possession* of Christ's own blood bought people. I shall perhaps be asked, then, and shall endeavor to answer the question.

1. WHAT IS HEAVEN?

Is it a place? or a state? one or both?

I. As already remarked, it is spoken of in the Scriptures as an inheritance—"the lot of our inheritance"—a possession to be bestowed by Christ upon his sanctified ones. Heaven begins *here*, on earth. Its seat is the human soul. We are prepared for it through the impartation to us by the Holy Spirit of heavenly desires, thoughts, and affections. That which is essentially of the earth, in its sinful sense, is taken away. The Lord puts a new spirit within his children, as speaks the prophet Ezekiel, He takes the stony heart out of our flesh, and gives us a heart of flesh. We are renewed after the image and likeness of Christ. A different nature is communicated; old things pass away, and all things become new. This is heaven begun, begun it may be, at the very outset of our earthly career, as in the case of Samuel, or of Timothy who from a child had known the scriptures, or of many a devoted young person in our churches and Sunday Schools. And so imperceptible is this change sometimes—for the spirit of God works variously—that it is impossible to fix the day or date of its commencement, whilst in others, again, it has come with the suddenness of the lightning's flash, or as with the violence of the tornado.

2 *We carry our heaven with us whithersoever we go.* The soul which realizes the enjoyment of the Saviour's presence experiences a foretaste of the bliss of the heavenly sanctuary, no matter whether in marble halls, in forest wilde, in noisome dungeon, or on the trackless ocean. Thanks to His holy name, no bolts nor bars can shut me off from communion with that Blessed One whom truly to know is life eternal! On stormy watch, or even amid hall of battle, or pestilential fumes, the Christian can, and will hold converse with his

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VI.

Heaven's Many Mansions.

In my Father's house are many mansions
—John xiv. 2.

There is no truth on which my soul more delights to dwell—paradoxical though it may seem to say it—than that of God's inflexible justice. When Abraham pleaded with the Lord on behalf of guilty Sodom, he said, as fearing not to be contradicted, "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—*Gen. xviii. 25.*

The position has been taken by some, to avoid certain theological difficulties, that God's idea of justice is different from man's,—in other words, that He has one standard of justice for himself, another for us! But that seems most unreasonable: for surely *our* sense of the right and the just, the good and the true, must have been implanted within us by the Almighty Creator: and therefore He neither would nor could sanction two contrary or opposing measures of these properties. Such a supposition were entirely unworthy of an all-wise Being, as is our heavenly Father.

Now I hold it as utterly at variance with all right principle, as alike unscriptural and unphilosophical, that there should be a sameness of rewards and punishments; that equal felicity should, on the one hand, be conceded to the long-trying faithful servants of God, and to the "scarcely saved;" and on the other, that equal punishment should be meted out to the poor weak victim of temptation, and to the man who, all his life-long, has "worked wickedness with greediness." In the distribution of the awards of Eternity, under the government of a righteous God, one would think regard must surely be had to the respective grades of merit or demerit characterizing the individual.

In perfect harmony with this view is the declaration of our Lord in the text; "In my Father's house are many mansions"—not *one* mansion, then, but "many;" not one house with but one room, but many rooms in the same house, and those many rooms filled with diversified classes of occupants.

Let us take a view of human society as existing at present in our world.

There are diversified elements which go to the make-up of that society. Men are drawn together by the attractive force of similarity of feeling, by congeniality of disposition. It were a trite remark to say that antagonistic characters cannot dwell together side by side in harmony. One man has a taste for high art, the beautiful, the poetical; the other is all plain matter of fact, utterly unromantic and unpoetical. One has a keen and appreciative ear for music; the other is utterly unmoved by any "concord of sweet sounds." This Christian man delights to worship God beneath fretted arch and in vaulted aisle, surrounded by magnificent designs in architecture, the rich gorgeous light, rainbow tinted, streaming in upon him thro' painted window: and all this, we may well say instead of detracting from, acts as adjunct to his devotional feelings and perceptions—it does to mine; whereas that other one, utterly devoid of taste or poetry or sentiment, can worship God more pleasurably to himself, in a Barn or a Church resembling one, utterly devoid of any the least pretension to the comely or the beautiful.

One man, again, thrives upon food which to another man would be little short of poison. This one longs for the frozen regions of the Arctic; that one pines for the latitude of the Torrid Zone. This man's genius is mechanical and practical; that one's suberbly unrealistic and ideal. Here we have a devotee of the classics of ancient Greece and Rome, buried in the tomes of Homer, Thucydides, Cicero, or Juvenal. Yonder is one absorbed in the mysteries of the Differential and Integral Calculus, Quadratic equations, Algebra, or Conic Sections.

Now it were obviously useless to attempt to fuse all these infinitely discordant elements. Their happiness consists in their separations. *They must agree to differ*, otherwise their insurmountable antagonisms would give rise to calamities incalculable. There would be danger of constant and fatal explosions. When cloud comes in contact with cloud, there follow the flashing of

the Lightning and the reverberations of the Thunder. Can two walk together except they be agreed? Their only safety consists in living in different habitations.

And so in things heavenly. I apprehend there must be different spheres or "mansions" in God's glorious Kingdom, that each of the redeemed in Christ may be as happy as his or her capacity shall admit of. On earth all Christians have not, by any means, the same experiences. There are degrees of faith and hope and love. Some rejoice in manifest tokens of the Divine favor; they have the comforting witness of the Spirit to their Divine Sonship; the precious assurance of pardon and forgiveness. They know whom they have believed; and are firmly persuaded that he shall give them a crown of rejoicing at the last day. Accepted in the beloved, they can "sing songs in the night." The Comforter speaks peace to their souls. They have entered within the veil; have been hidden in the cleft of the rock. They walk by faith, and not by sight; and so walking, have laid hold on the promise of salvation which God has made to the believer in Christ Jesus.

Others there are, again, who have embraced the gospel in the love of it, but are nevertheless devoid of that rich joyousness of hope and consolation which is the privilege of their more favored brethren. Their faith is like the grain of mustard seed; so weak and tender is it that it needs careful tending, or it will be overgrown with weeds and brambles. The lamp flame quivers in the socket so that the rough wind may puff it out at any moment. No soaring aloft is there on the wings of faith and love—nothing but a faint and feeble fluttering of the pinion, so that instead of, Eagle-like, attaining the mountain crag, their place is low down in the valley of humiliation.

I know Christians of this kind, who, instead of the white garb of joy and gladness, are forever clad in the sombre habiliments of mourning. If a believing friend is taken from them, instead of thanking God that his toils are over, his warfare ended, and his soul at rest on the bosom of the Saviour, they selfishly bewail his loss; and talk hesitatingly and doubtfully of his salvation. Instead of "Soldier of Christ, well done!" they chant doleful Misereres

and lamentations. They hang their harp upon the willows, and refuse to sing the songs of Zion: forgetful, the while, that all this is dishonoring, because a refusal to take God at His word, and to believe the precious assurances he has given us of pardon and forgiveness.

Now, is it not clear as the noon-day that those weak ones, to be happy in glory—for not only do they live, but they also die in this condition—must needs have a place by themselves in the mansions of the Father? Surely they would not be at home in the company of such saints of God as Abraham, and Moses, and David, Samuel, Isaiah, Job or Ezekiel? Matthew, and John, and Paul, and James, would not be, for these weakling Christians, most assuredly, fitting associates in the Kingdom of glory. Such men as Wickliffe, and Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and Leighton, and Wesley and Whitfield, and Scott and Chalmers, and Cecil and Simeon; Oh, would they not grow weary of the doubtings and staggerings of those I have been describing? Bye and bye, when they shall have progressed upwards—for I trust—nay I feel confident—there will be progressing in heaven; it is scarcely conceivable that the dissolution of the body shall put an end to the progressive capacity of the soul—when they shall have attained a fitness for the higher seats in the kingdom, God will admit them there; and then shall they praise Him with more gladsome lips, and with louder bursts of adoring gratitude than heretofore. Oh! there is, it seems to me, a depth of meaning in those words of the Saviour "In my Father's house are many mansions," for, if "many," there must be a purpose in them. This is not like the language of metaphor: or, if metaphor it be, then it must be significant of distinction.

I like that idea of Mr. Faber, that the "many mansions" of the Father are the many planets of God's Universe. Of course it is speculation only; and yet, as it enlarges our conception of a possible meaning of this text, it is surely deserving of our respectful consideration. His words are: "the true import of the passage," *i.e.* my text: "is, that as there are many mansions in the vast mundane House of the Father, so Christ will go to prepare one of them, as the place allotted for the future

permanent abode of His Disciples ; and that, when the preparation shall have been completed in the Day of Final Judgment, He will come again at His Second Advent, and receive them unto Himself, that, where he is, there they may be also."

"The result is,"—he continues—"that, as *one* of the many mansions is the destined future Heaven of the redeemed human race, the other numerous mansions must be other Heavens, severally allotted to those armies of angels over all of whom, though each army be immediately subjected to its own special commander, the great archangel presides, and is thence congruously revealed as the Captain of the Host of Jehovah.

"But the particular mansion allotted to the redeemed human race, is this very planet of ours when the dissolved first earth shall have passed away so far as its present organization is concerned, and shall have been succeeded by a new earth framed out of the present dissipated materials.

"Hence, if our future Heaven be *one* of the innumerable orbs which are all the handiwork of the Almighty Creator, analogy requires that the *other* Heavens should be the other orbs : and thus we have a consistent explanation of the *many* mansions which our Lord declares to be in the House of His Heavenly Father."

Now this theory may be true, or it may not. If true, it throws a flood of light upon that much discussed question of *where is Heaven?* But it is not altogether in harmony with the view which I have presented for your consideration—the view, viz : that in Heaven, wherever that may be, there are *various habitations*, representative of various degrees of happiness, various degrees of happiness, various grades—if I may so speak—of glory. This latter idea seems preeminently that of the Apostle Paul, as expressed in that familiar chapter, the 15th of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and particularly the 41st verse : "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another in glory. "So also," he adds, "is the resurrection of the dead"—not as to form, for all will be raised at once and alike—but as to results.

It seems to me that, insensibly, we

are too much in the habit of localizing God, and also, of contradicting our own theory or doctrine. We say, and that truly, that Jehovah "fills immensity with his presence,"—that God is *everywhere*, both in the Heavens above, and on earth beneath : nay, were I to use so strong an expression as to say that the very Hell of Hells is open to His inspection, and at His command, you would not deny it, for the Almighty must surely be omnipotent also in His own universe? He could not have created it, to be thereafter excluded from any part of portion of it, by force of any unimaginable circumstances, or agencies, independent of His control.

Now, this being true, both in theory and in fact, and supported as it undoubtedly is, by Holy Scripture, and therefore no mere speculation, we find that God is not far off, but very nigh to every one of us. He has not retired to a distance ; but is constantly with us in our homes, in our business, and in our daily walks. And, if we only hold communion with him, *there is*, to us, our Heaven. He is with us, whilst stretched upon our beds at night wrapped in unconscious slumber, dreaming sweetly, it may be, or else taking unknowingly that refreshment so much needed by the weary o'er-worked frame. He is with us in our hours of sickness : and in our bereavements the Angel of His presence is at hand to comfort and uphold, so that we shall not give way to hopeless sorrow and despair. That vision of Jacob's ladder at Padan Aram had a meaning in it, not for him alone, but for every child of God living in these latter days. Oh yes ! the believer *does* hold communion with the God and Father of his spirit without waiting for his hereafter. We need not to die and be buried, and we need not await the glorious morn of the Resurrection before being admitted to His presence, and being made partakers of the peace-giving influences of His blessed Spirit. *Perhaps* there is *somewhere* a throne of God ; somewhere in the vast universe, a place more transcendently beautiful than any other of His many mansions : a place where He may be said to make His home, where Christ stands in all the splendor of his glorified humanity, as our tender elder brother—for He took with him his physical body when he ascended to Heaven—where the holy angels and the vast host of the redeem-

ed chant unending praises : and into that place shall be gathered all the vast host of the redeemed—the General Assembly and Church of the first-born—but this is, perhaps, only ideal after all ; an accomodation of language to our limited capacity ; a formula of expression suited to the comprehension of the limited human understanding, and not plain, palpable, actual fact. This we know however, :—that the very Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God : and we do know, furthermore, that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” The place of the Lord’s feet is glorious. (See also Is. lxiv, 4.)

“In My Father’s house are many mansions”—said our blessed Lord : and hence we derive an argument in favor of putting forth every possible effort for the soul’s greater sanctification. We are co-workers together with God in this matter : and therefore I say putting forth every effort, whilst depending, at the same time, upon the grace of God.

It should be for us a powerful incentive to the cultivation of personal holiness to know that in our Father’s house are “many mansions,” for it will largely depend upon where we stand upon the the ladder of sanctification here on earth as to which of these mansions we shall occupy hereafter. The man who barely gets within the gates of pearl—who is saved only “just as by fire”—cannot expect to attain a position of pre-eminence in the heavenly kingdom. And while it would seem true that every saved soul shall be accorded just the degree of felicity of which it is capable, in the better world, undoubtedly the higher we rise in the scale of Christian grace, and the nearer we approach the image and likeness of the Master, so much nearer shall we get to Him, and so much more intimate shall be our communion with him in the world hereafter.

Oh, for a more increasing and progressive holiness ! Oh for greater ardor of desire after increasing sanctification ! The future will be a world of compensations, alike to the righteous and the wicked. Every act and labor of love performed here on earth in the cause of the Saviour, and from love to Him, will be remembered by Him in His glory and in His kingdom. Not a tear

of penitence we shed ; not a longing after holiness we experience ; not a lust subdued ; not a sin abandoned and forsaken ; not a child of sorrow helped and relieved ; not a pilgrim aided on the heavenward journey ; but will be noticed by the Master, and by Him placed to our account, and made conducive to our happiness in the day when He shall come to make up His jewels. The Lord is looking on, my brethren : not unmindful is He—no, not for a moment ! of what is passing in His vineyard. A life spent for Christ, and in the interests of a true philanthropy, is a life spent to good advantage, and will not have passed without its compensations. The nearer we get to God on earth in heart and affections, the nearer shall we get to Him in His dwelling place hereafter.

And on the contrary, the further we wander away from God, the more difficult will that make our reclamation. Some think—but I take, for one, no pleasure in the thought—that in the Eternal world there will be a constant progression in evil, and that, therefore, the alienation of the wicked from God will become constantly more intensified. But this would make sin eternal ; and thus, a power which God is either unable or unwilling to controul ; an idea, to me, most repugnant.

Certain it is, however, that it is both unwise and unsafe to trust to any posthumous amelioration of the soul’s condition, inasmuch as we have no Scripture warranty for believing, but only at most a charitable *hope*, that such amelioration may be possible. The only wise way, therefore, the only prudent, safe way is to make assurance of our salvation certain, if that be possible ; and possible it is, since Christ Jesus came into our world, *for the very purpose* of saving sinners.

God would surely not tantalize His creatures by offering them a salvation which is unattainable. The adorable Redeemer would not have told us of mansions of the Father which are unreachable. These are set before us to stimulate our desires, and to intensify our ambitions.

Crowns we shall have, and harps, and palms, if only faithful : not crowns material, I need not say, but metaphorical. And we shall sing heaven’s new song of joy and gladness. Oh may it be ours—every one of us—to realize that blessedness !

PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE STATE.

VII.

The Nethermost Hell, and its Essential Elements.

The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Rev. xiv, 11.

Some there are who say that those who die in their sins shall be the subjects of endless conscious punishment in Hell; others that, after enduring their due meed of retribution, they shall be restored; and yet others that, having suffered in the eternal world according to their misdeeds and continuing still impenitent and rebellious, they will be blotted out of existence, and so become as though they had never been. To these may be added a fourth class, who, combining the views of the last two, hold that, a further probation being still allowed them in the future world:—

(1.) Those who avail of it and become truly penitent will eventually be restored; and

(2.) Those who still continue obdurate shall be finally blotted out of existence by the Almighty power of God, and thus sin universally abolished, and the kingdom restored to the Father, Christ shall be "all in all."

In this sermon I shall discuss neither of these propositions, each of which has more or less able advocates in its favor, but will simply take the ground that by "hell"—the "Nethermost hell," rather—we may understand that dark abode to which the finally impenitent shall descend after the Resurrection and General Judgment.

And my theme to-night will be no pleasing one, though necessary to this series of discourses, yet I trust that, with God's help, it may prove profitable. I—IS THERE A HELL THEN? AND IF SO,

WHERE, AND WHAT IS IT?

To this question, often asked, I will endeavor, in the first place, to give an answer:

1. There are two terms in the New Testament, indifferently translated. Hell in King James' version, but properly discriminated in the new or revised edition. The one used always when the intenser form of suffering is indicated, being Gehenna, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, the other Hades, or the place of departed spirits, without regard to condition. That valley, outside the walls of Jerusalem, was a place in which fires were continually kept burning, and so in process of time it came to be in the popular mind, a symbol of the place of the lost. "Where their worn dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

2. Now that there is such a place, can I think no more be doubted than that there is a Heaven, and for precisely the same reasons. It is evident that there must be retribution after death, for

otherwise the monstrous villains of the world need but to commit a painless suicide, and so escape "unwhipped of justice." And that the sufferings of "Hades" are but anticipatory, will, I think, be evident when we reflect that as yet there has been no resurrection of the body. As the righteous will need their bodies in order to the full enjoyment of their bliss, so will the finally impenitent need theirs to the complement of the measure of their wretchedness.

3. It is equally true that metaphorically speaking some men carry their own hell with them. Before death even, its baleful fires flame up within their souls. That is a terrible Scripture of the Apostle Paul; "some men's sins are open beforehand, or evident, going before to judgment;" 1 Tim. v. 24; a warning which might well affright the wrong-doer; and Milton graphically writes:—

"Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell!"

Such are described by the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, as "given over by God to a reprobate mind"—Rom. I. 28—following wickedness with greediness.

4. But there is something more than metaphor, or the figures of Scripture are overstrained, which we may not affirm. We read that the Devil's rebellious angels are confined "in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the last great day." Jude 6. What means that declaration, if there be no place of penal confinement, and that, one too horrible to contemplate? I grant that the expressions "fire and brimstone," "undying worm," "smoke of torment," and such like, are but figures of speech; but yet, and nevertheless, they are figures which certainly must represent certain awe-inspiring and most tremendous realities: Who shall undertake to limit them? We shall see, I think, before I close, that they have a meaning the most stupendous. May none here ever realize that meaning in an awful experience!

The question of precise *locality* is one of not the smallest consequence, and it were but trifling to dwell upon it; we have far more important matter to attend to-night than *that*, unless as connected with the second member of our enquiry.

5. Hell, then, it may be stated, is that most horrible of all places in God's creation in which shall be confined the souls of the persistently rebellious against the Divine commands—those who shall, notwithstanding God's patience with them and the imploring entreaties of His spirit, have died in their sins, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and upon whom, at the last day, the Judge shall have pro-

nounced the dread sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. xxv, 41, Revd. Version. It is a place in which shall be gathered the moral scum and offscourings of earth; the abode of the unholy, the abandoned, the lewd, and the profane. The men and women who have paid no heed to the requirements of God upon them; who have worked wickedness with greediness; who have triumphed over down-trodden virtue; wallowed in the mire of sin; turned a deaf ear to the warnings and remonstrances of the Gospel, the constraining entreaties of the Holy Spirit. Hell will have for its inhabitants those who in their day and generation might have found grace and mercy, but would not; whom the ministry of the Lord Jesus would have snatched as brands from the burning, and opened for their acceptance the gates of salvation, but who persistently rushed upon their destruction, and turned their backs upon the Saviour. In hell will be seen congregated those who have heretofore made mercy impossible because inconsistent with the Divine truthfulness and justice—truthfulness in the execution of threatened penalty, and justice to those who have obediently complied with the law's requirements; all, in short, who have wantonly and foolishly stoned away their day of grace, and so put it out of the power of God to forgive them, because wilfully, deliberately, and persistently oblate and impenitent.

6. There is a wide-spread incredulity, more or less forcible, in regard to the existence of a hell, owing probably in some degree to the exaggerated representations of the pulpit. But this I will say that if there be not one, there surely ought to be, for I see not how God's moral government could be sustained without it.

Why do we, generally, in close relation to our Temples of Justice, sometimes under the same roof, invariably build prisons or penitentiaries? Because law without its sanctions were powerless, and society would soon become impossible, being overrun by its villains and murderers.

A few days since, one moving in what are called, *par excellence*, the "Society" circles of a western metropolis was arrested on a charge of embezzlement. He had been leading a fast life, as many such people do to their sorrow. Living in a fashionable quarter, keeping up a sumptuous establishment, his expenses outstripped his means, and to supply deficiencies, he squandered the fortune entrusted to the safe-keeping of his *honour* (!) by the presumably now beggared widow of a former employer. Nor was that all:

He had recklessly expended in idle pomp and sensuous gratification the funds of various clients, which he had collected in his professional capacity. Should there not be a hell for such men, under a righteous government?

Again: the papers constantly tell us of murderous house-breakings. Indeed, they are too numerous and sickening to particularize. A lazy scoundrel, lusting for the wealth which he would not earn, invades your domicile at dead of night, brains wife or children sleeping by your side, then, on your awakening, mortally wounds yourself, and, in the scuffle, he himself is sent into Eternity. Now, should there not be a Hell for all such monsters? Would that be heaven to you in which you should behold the wretch, his hands still reeking with the blood of your murdered innocents? He had not repented: no time was given him for that. In proper self-defence, you sent him to his own place. *Could* that place, by the tenest stretching of imagination, be Heaven to a child of God? Go somewhere he must; if not to Heaven, the abode of God's saints alone, then obviously to hell: and hot, and deep, and foul, and dark, should that place be!

7. Hell may be described as a sort of moral Vesuvius—a boiling, upheaving crater of iniquity and pollution! There will be the Herods, the Neros, the Caligulas, the Borgias, the Wolseys, the Robespierres of the world's history—men who should have been a blessing to the race, but who have proved themselves a curse.

"Sinners of every age and every type; The proud, despiteful, fierce, implacable, Unthankful, and unholy, and unclean."

Yesterday, etc.

No ray of sunlight can ever reach its darksome caverns in the Throne of God! Its darkness, ink-like, pitch-like, only relieved by the lurid glare of the smoke of torment. No word of purity is heard; nothing but the howlings of remorse; the groans of anguish and despair. Such, brethren, is the picture which the Scriptures draw of the Infernal pit.

There are some prisons on this earth which might serve to give a faint idea of what hell must be, because of the wretches who are there confined. I have seen some such. Villains whose countenances bespeak their character at a glance—thieves, cut-throats and assassins! Monsters so depraved by sensuality and vice, that crime has ceased to be crime to them; death in ignomy the only future they look forward to—the place of the lost, their habitation in the hereafter. Not that all have sinned alike, for some there are but neophytes in crime; but all, more or less, are bad—the very atmosphere pollution, Once

those men might have been saved, perchance, it is now too late! Hardened in sin have they become! They prefer darkness to light, because their deeds are evil.

Now I want to make this point with you. Not one of those wretched prisoners need have occupied that loathsome place without his own consent. I mean by this that his own consent was necessary to the perpetration of the crimes which sent him there. Conscience will force him to exclaim:

"Myself alone am cause of all my woe!"

The law would not have laid hold upon him had he not violated its enactments, Robbery, murder, arson, were deeds to which he was not forced. And he sinned wilfully and deliberately with eyes open to the consequences. Therefore he may be said to have made election of his own desperate fate. Just so in regard to hell. Were God's laws kept, the place would be abolished — none would be confined therein; and he who persistently breaks that law does so of his own accord. God created him a free agent, and so invested him with the responsibility of choice. Here it may be enquired:

II. WHAT CONSTITUTES THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF HELL IN THE HUMAN SOUL?

First: *adaptation of spirit.* He that goes thither goes to "his own place," like Judas. He goes, because he has virtually chosen it in defiance of warning and admonition, in preference to Heaven. For that a choice was offered him in the gospel cannot be denied.

"Evil, be thou my good!"

was his reply.

The bad man unfits himself for Heaven by foulness of tongue, impurity of life and conduct, and by deliberate self-will and hardness of heart. The door of mercy stood wide open inviting him to enter in; but he slammed it to, as it were, in the very face of God! His heavenly Father *did not send him to perdition.* He went there, because to the abode of kindred spirits. Unfitted for the companionship of the redeemed because of his wicked works, just as water will seek its level, he sought the companionship of the depraved, and so found his level in the nether world. There was nothing abnormal in this, but, in perfect correspondence with the processes of nature, sowing to the wind he reaped the whirlwind; exactly according to the tree which he planted, he gathers fruit.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself

Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

—Paradise Lost; Book I., 235, 6.

Take a filthy man and set him in the midst of the Paradise of God, his heart unchanged, it were no Paradise to him. Talk of God's not being so cruel as to exclude any from his Kingdom! The

charge is groundless, in that the wicked are self-excluded—excluded by virtue of their own incapacity for the enjoyments and pursuits of Heaven. I see not how it could be justly otherwise. Put a pure and virtuous man into a prison, such as that I spoke of, it were a hell to him; because repugnant to every feeling of his own nature. Place an imure and devilish man in heaven: that, to him, were virtual hell, because out of harmony with his every desire and aspiration. *Each in his own place,* then, becomes a demand of justice—a first principle.

So that you see the wicked must herd with the wicked, such being their deliberate choice, the natural and fitting sequel to a life of wickedness. It needs no act of God to accomplish this. *Nature seeks an equilibrium;* and so, by the law of spiritual gravitation, will wicked and ungodly men and women gravitate towards each other there (just as they do in this world,) and conformably to the awards of the final judgment. And just as the magnet is attracted by the loadstone, and as the pious, the God-fearing and Christ-loving draw near to each other here on earth, so will they enjoy thereafter, but in heroic degree, the delights of heavenly intercourse and communion. This in the eternal fitness of things, from which I see no reason to expect any the least deviation.

Second: *The conviction of the forfeiture of heaven* will form, I think, an essential and most aggravating ingredient in the wretchedness of the lost

When a soul created after the image of God shall come to consider in the eternal world what it might have been but for sin—sin wilfully and deliberately indulged—it appears to me that it were more than enough to drive that soul mad if such a thing might be. For one in torment to look upwards to those gates of light, and to realize in all its horror that the privilege of treading the golden streets is reserved for *others,* not for him or her; that, whilst enchained a prisoner in that awful place which he has chosen, more than by any act of the Almighty Father who might have crushed him in the days of his impotent rebelliousness, but simply in compassion would not, *his hands shall not be allowed to strike the chords of the heavenly harps, nor his voice attune to the heavenly music;* to think that, instead of a white robed saint, partaker of the marriage supper of the Lamb, his garments are those of filthiness, curses his clothing, his associates murderers, adulterers and all liars—his fate "the *second Death,*" oh what horror that! who shall attempt to deplete its awfulness? Inspiration alone could do it; and Inspiration *has* expressed it in that terrible

formula of "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched!"

III. But you perhaps will ask me, *is there no possibility of escape? shall the punishment of the wicked be eternal? shall they not rather be blotted out?*

Let me say here that I have no sympathy with that sort of Christianity which is ever ready to defend the awfulness and the eternity of Hell for others, but which the zealot would not for one moment tolerate for himself. Let us not forget that the measure we would mete out to others will be meted to us again.

In regard to the first interrogatory, I am willing to say that *so long as sin shall last, so long there must and will be penalty; and penalty means suffering*—suffering in the ratio of guilt. Sin eternal, so will be retribution. Now suppose we read the text, as some would render it, the smoke of their torment ascendeth up "for ages and ages" instead of "for ever and ever," would you be any the more reconciled to its endurance? "Perhaps a little," you reply, "but only just a little." "Age—long suffering!" Is that the extent of your ambition? Anything, so it be not eternal! Oh what quibbling! BEWARE, and deal frankly with your souls. You don't want even "ages" of agony; and yet these are denounced against the impenitent transgressor. Oh! flee to the stronghold while yet there is time. See! The avenger of blood is behind you; escape for your life—hasten and tarry not!

Furthermore, as to the 2nd and 3rd enquiry: but no! before proceeding farther, I too must ask a question, and it is this: *Why do you wish to know whether the retributions of the future shall or shall not be eternal? Because of a prurient curiosity—an idle prying into the great secrets of the future? or because you are weighing in your own mind whether it will pay or not to defy Omnipotence, and spurn the gracious offer of mercy and forgiveness?*

Assuredly if you have determined, as is your manifest duty, to renounce your sins and to walk henceforth in newness of life, through Divine grace, it can be a matter of small personal concern to you whether the punishment of sin shall or shall not be eternal. You have laid hold upon the horns of the altar. You have accepted the salvation of the Gospel. You have enlisted as a Christian soldier; fled to the stronghold as a prisoner of hope. For you, then, there is now no condemnation. Why need you, therefore, be anxious to secure the eternal condemnation of your brother? Can you not leave that to his Master, before whom he standeth or falleth? You can surely believe that the Judge of all the earth will do only what is right, that his

punishments will be such as men deserve and His Word declares. If it be God's will that any soul of man shall "perish," perish he will, whatever that may mean: that "his root shall be as rottenness and his blossom shall be as dust," (Is. v. 24)—that also shall happen to him. This we know: that the persistently wicked, "who know not God and obey not the Gospel," shall "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2 Thess. i. 9.)

Go home, then, my brother, and think and pray over this. Lay the matter before God in your secret heart; then search His Word, and pray to be guided aright and led to choose the good part; and then, if still unsatisfied, unable to decide between Christ and Belial, Heaven and Hell, come back to me and we will talk it over; but you must first pledge me to make and say you have made an honest and determined effort to escape the condemnation of Hell and to find, the way to the glory everlasting.

And finally, brethren, one and all, let me entreat you to beware how you do aught which shall disqualify you for the realms of glory, for if you do, the choice you make must, in the nature of things, be that awarded you. I have endeavored to set before you, in these sermons, Life and Death, Heaven and Hell: may God enable you to choose the better part which shall never be taken from you.

And to choose without delay. The sands of time are ebbing fast away.

"And every beating pulse we tell
Makes but the number less."

Not long will salvation be in our option. That door is open yet. The Saviour stands there inviting all to enter in. The Spirit and the Bride say come. The pitcher is not yet broken at the fountain nor the wheel broken at the cistern. The marriage feast is prepared, and all things are ready for the invited guests. Let there, then, be no dallying with iniquity; no trifling pondering of "the chances." Heaven is within your reach; Hell may be shunned and avoided. What, then, hinders you from making the better choice? Make it, in the strength of God, and you are safe.

And to you, brethren beloved, who are walking by faith and not by sight, let me say, be encouraged and press on. You have girded on the Christian armor: Keep your weapons burnished, and stand with loins girded and lamps burning; and yours shall be the glad welcome, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

APPENDIX A—PAGE 10.

The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome did not look upon their departed friends as lost. They believed that death only separated them from each other for a time : that soon they should meet, in more happy re-union, in the realms of Hades. *How* they became impressed with this notion, it were useless to enquire : as to the *fact*, no one acquainted with classic story will deny it. The poets frequently alluded to it. Homer, the great Grecian, for example, represents the shades of his heroes as retaining all the characteristics, dispositions, habits, stations and peculiarities which belonged to them before death. (Book II, line 48, &c). The *Elysium* and the *Tartarus* of the poets correspond respectively to the *Paradise* and the *Hell* of our Sacred Scriptures, or rather, according to Dr. Campbell, as quoted by Bishop Hobart, Page 100), "the prison of Hades wherein criminals are kept until the General Judgment." The sentiments of Socrates, probably the greatest Grecian philosopher who ever lived, are so well known as to need but the bare allusion. It is evident from the language used in conversation with his friends, after being sentenced to drink the fatal hemlock, that altho' he spoke with apparent doubting, he nevertheless in the main believed that his spirit would meet and recognize, and in turn be recognized by the great and good of former times. "If"—says he—"the common expression be true that death conveys us to those regions which are inhabited by the spirits of departed men, will it not be unspeakably happy to escape the hands of mere nominal judges to appear before * * such as Minos and Rhadamanthus, and to associate with all who have maintained the cause of truth and rectitude? * * Is it nothing to converse with Orpheus, and Homer, and Hesiod? * * With what pleasure could I leave the world to hold communion with Palamedes, Ajax and others, who, like me, have had an unjust sentence pronounced against them?"

Now hear Cicero : "O glorious day ! when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene, to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits ; and not with those only whom I have just mentioned, but with my dear Cato that best of sons and most valuable of men !"

APPENDIX B—PAGE 16.

There is one departed—Bishop Burgess, late of the Diocese of Maine—who will not be accused of intemperate enthusiasm by those who knew him when here below, whose words I shall ask no indulgence for quoting here. He says : "Those we loved on earth may be spectators at this moment of those they left behind them. The partition wall that separates Time from Eternity may be so thin that those on the other side may hear the voice of music and prayer lifted up to God from those on this side ; the eye of saints in glory may have that penetrating power that it can see through the partition, and witness the countless races that are on their course to immortality and glory." *Voices of the Dead*, p. 435.

To me there is an inexpressible sweetness in the thought that our friends who are asleep in Jesus may not be so distant from us as we had perhaps conceived. Should this be irreconcilable with the idea of confinement in a separate place, in expectation of the Resurrection, then will I give up that idea for the sake of this. To think that not only are we ministered to by God's angelic agents, and compassed about with that vast cloud of Old Testament witnesses of whom the Apostle makes mention, but that our own dear friends, a sainted mother or wife, for example, or a loving father, may be also with us in our sleeping and in our waking hours, suggesting thoughts—for aught I know—of purity and peace, oh ! what harm can there be in that belief? Men may call it the romance, the enthusiam, the exaggeration of religion, if they will. I do not think any will dare to call it "superstition."

NOTES.

1. For reasons of expediency alone I do not state my own solution of the difficulty alluded to under Heading II. of Sermon I., page 8.

2. I should also have said that just as there will be various degrees of happiness in Heaven, so by parity of reasoning, will there undoubtedly be differing degrees of wretchedness in Hell.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery to the present time. It is divided into three periods: the colonial period, the revolutionary period, and the federal period.

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